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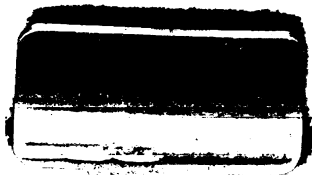
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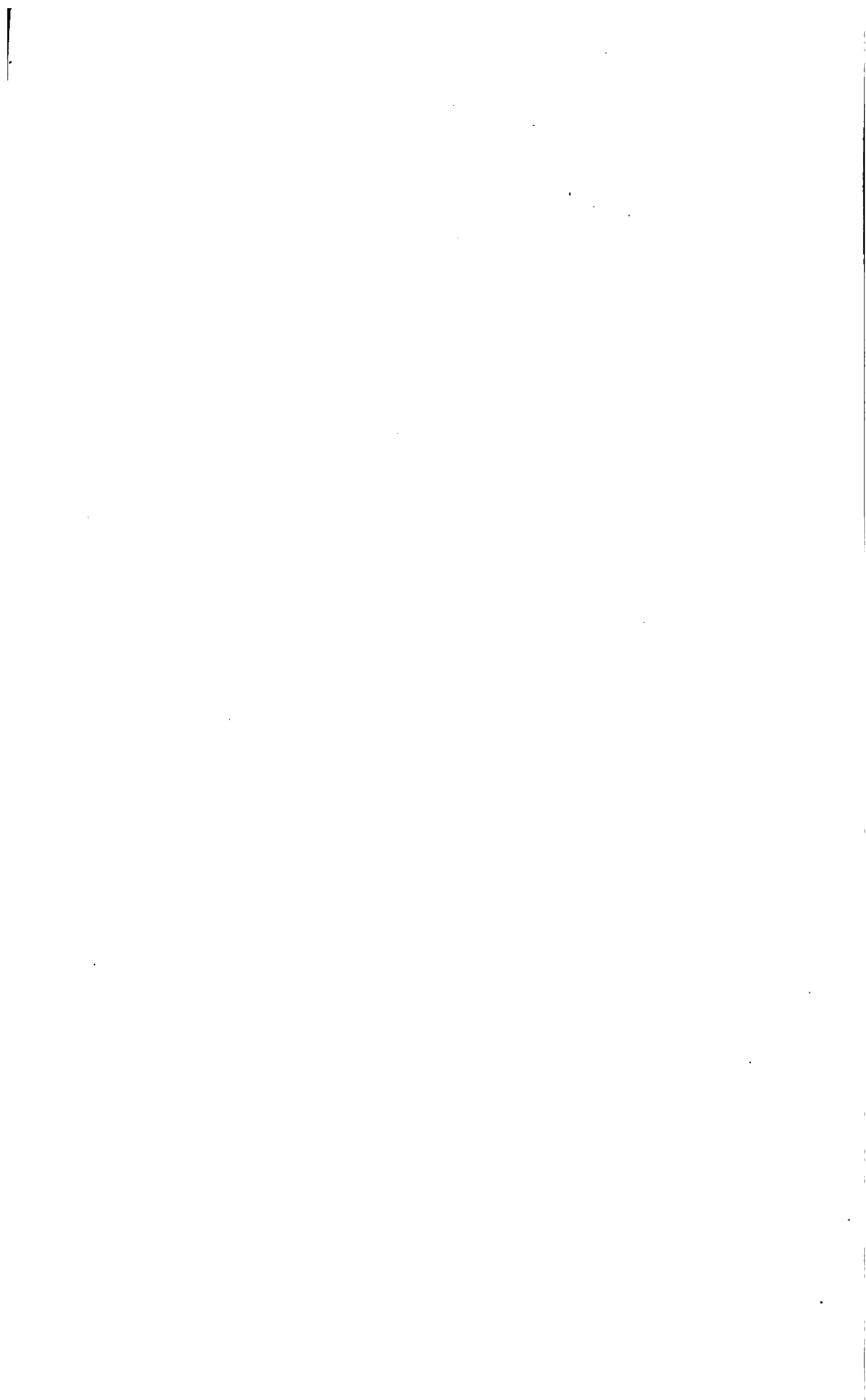
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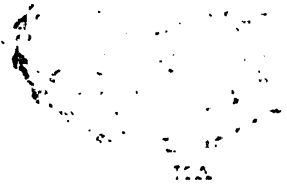
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INTRODUCTION
TO THE
LITERARY HISTORY
OF THE
FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH
CENTURIES.



LONDON:
PRINTED FOR T. CADELL JUN. AND W. DAVIES,
IN THE STRAND.

1798.



INDEPENDENCE

1776

DECLARATION

1776

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



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[vi]

P R E F A C E

WHAT there is nothing more wanting
in English literature, that a history
of the revival of letters, will be generally
admitted, and the author of the following
tract grounds much of his hope of success
on its connexion with so important and
so interesting an undertaking.

On this subject, before he solicits the
reader's attention to an explanation of the
work before him, he will beg leave to
premise a few observations.

About the era of this revival, or, to
speak more correctly, of the revival of
classical and polite literature, there can be
no dispute. Dante, Petrarch, and Boccace
were at once its earliest and most successful
restorers. Its progress was facilitated by
the introduction of the Greek language
and the influx of Greek scholars, and the

possibility of relapse precluded by the noble invention of printing. It may be more difficult to determine, where the labours of its historian should terminate ; but they seem to have an easy and natural close with the fifteenth century. Polite learning had not only obtained in Italy an honourable establishment ; but found friends, admirers, and propagators in every part of Europe. The papacy of Leo the Tenth, which marks the opening of the sixteenth century, was an illustrious period, and is deservedly ranked with the ages of Alexander and Augustus ; but it forms an epoch by itself, and demands a distinct historian. Literature had then passed its dawn, the proper subject of historical and critical consideration, and was advancing fast to its meridian splendour. The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries therefore form the range, and sufficiently ample it will be found, within which the history of reviving letters seems properly confined.

On

On turning his thoughts to the *manner* in which such a work might be written to render it useful and interesting, three modes occurred with different degrees of facility and merit. 1. The first is chalked out by Johnson, who, according to his biographer Boswell, would have "a history of the revival of learning contain an account of *whatever* contributed to the restoration of literature, such as controversies, printing, the destruction of the Greek empire, the encouragement of great men, with the lives of the most eminent patrons and professors of *all kinds* of learning in *different* countries." This is a plan on a large scale, like the powers of its framer, and may perhaps remind the critical reader of Bacon's noble outline of a general history of learning, the most perfect a scholar could devise; but which no scholar can hope to complete*.

2. In-

* Argumentum non aliud est, quam ut ex omni memoria repetatur, quæ doctrinæ et artes, quibus unumquodque ætatibus et regionibus floruerint. Earum antiquitates, progressus, etiam peragra-

2. Inferior in merit, and easier in execution, seems the design which should select and arrange the more striking parts of literary history on its revival; record and illustrate those material causes by which its progress was obviously affected, exhibit those pre-eminent characters, whether of patrons or scholars, who most filled the public eye, and connect the literary with the political and general history of the period. Such a performance, while it carries with it considerable splendour and a permanent interest, offers not insurmountable difficulties to the scholar who has books to read, judgment to digest, and talents to compose.

peragrationes per diversas orbis partes (migrant enim scientiæ non secus ac populi) rursus declinationes, obliviones, infirmitates commemorantur. Observetur simul per singulas artes, inventionis causa et origo; tradendi mos et disciplina; colendi et exercendi ratio et instituta. Adiciantur etiam sectæ et controversiæ maxime celebres, quæ homines doctos tenuerunt, calumniæ quibus patuerunt, laudes et honores quibus decorati sunt. Notentur auctores præcipui, libri præfationes, scholæ, successores, academix, societates, collegia, ordines, denique omnia quæ ad statum literarum spectant. Bacon, de Augm. Scient. lib. 2. cap. 4.

3. But

lie 3: But as the present age is not remarkable for literary labour, perhaps a method of subordinate consequence, and a more practicable nature, may be viewed with greater complacency—a general and rapid outline—such a cursory, yet not indistinct, review of the revival of literature, as no laborious perusal of the most popular authors might suggest, and which might hope to satisfy learning, while it instructed ignorance and gratified curiosity. In other words, a hasty passage over this charming but undescribed country, in which the traveller would seize and exhibit the most interesting scenes, without aspiring to the accuracy of the topographer, the acuteness of the critic, and the dignity of the historian: a work strictly compendious, yet excluding no attractions of style, and which, though meant to instruct and inform, might be adapted to every comprehension, and find a friend in every reader.

Amid the varieties of literary history, these ideas have been little realised. The
 noble

noble work of Tiraboschi indeed, of all others, fills up best the idea, of Bacon and Johnson. The revival of polite learning forms only a part of his extensive labours; but a truly valuable part, since the history of Italian literature, for above a century after its revival, exhibits the annals of general learning, and the scholar's eye turns involuntarily from the penurious records of his own, to the riches of that favoured country. The history of French literature by the Benedictines, which extends only to the twelfth century, is executed on a plan nearly similar, and is a learned and profound, but unequal work. Baillet, Crescembini, and Warton have an undoubted claim to rank in the same class; but the plan of the two latter was confined to poetry, whose history they have well detailed, and Baillet executed only a small part of a design too vast for the grasp of any scholar.

The author does not conceive himself acquainted with any specimen, which may
properly

properly find a place under his second arrangement, without Goujet's History of French Literature should be considered as having a title to that distinction. Landi's abridgment of Tiraboschi, now naturalised in France, seems to carry with it all the pretensions that a professed abridgment can exhibit. Nor under the last head has any thing occurred which demands particular notice. The Revolutions of Literature by Denina, and the Sketches of Literary History by Alves, but faintly answer this idea, and both want, what must ever prove the principal recommendation to works designed for general perusal, the power to attract and fix attention.

It must be confessed, that in this country little has been done towards a history of the revival of letters. The unfortunate Collins gave a faint promise, and a more positive assurance found its way into the Essay on the Genius of Pope; but forty years have passed, and the subject has only

a

received

received two material illustrations. A single chapter by the masterly hand of Gibbon makes us regret that war and politics should have monopolised such a prodigality of talents. Mr. Roscoe has lately entered into more particular discussion, and done ample justice to the subject as far as it is connected with the life, character, and genius of his hero Lorenzo. But his work, with all its brilliancy of merit, seems by no means to supersede the design of considering, expressly and at large, the literary history of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

But at this neglect it is more reasonable to express concern than surprise, when we consider how long literary history in general has been suffered to languish without due cultivation, and what a rich produce crowned the toils of foreign scholars in the midst of our disgraceful sterility. Biography and criticism are its essential branches. With respect to the former, both France and

Germany

Germany exhibit early in the sixteenth century biographical specimens on a general scale, on the laudable principle of recording excellence in whatever country it might be found. Both narrowing that principle hastened to attest the merits of their own scholars with such extent in the plan, and such exactitude in the execution, that it may be reasonably questioned whether any man of merit amongst them has died unnoticed and unrecorded. How long, it may be asked, and in putting this question, indignation mingles with regret, how long would such an historian as Robertson have lain in his grave, before it had been hung with wreaths by his surviving friends? And would such men, if such now exist in France or Germany, as Hume and Gibbon, be driven to the necessity of writing their own lives, lest the task should be transferred to the hungry compiler of a biographical dictionary? Bates's Collection of Select Lives (1681) seems to be one of

the earliest samples of general biography, and Leland, Bale, Pitts, Lilly, and Wood, Winstanley, Fuller and Langbaine, will hardly contest the palm of national and particular biography with their continental rivals.

Criticism was not only introduced late into England but made a dilatory progress. To the great classical critics, who flourished in Italy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and in France during the latter period, we can oppose with confidence no greater names than those of More and Ascham. General criticism, or the extension of those principles which had been adopted in the discussion of antient writings to modern publications, was of a growth considerably later. Rymer may, perhaps, be considered as the first critic who generalized the art, and instituted a tribunal, where the author might expect a fair trial and an equitable sentence. The prefaces of Dryden, who united the critic and the poet, gave the art a vogue, and were ingenious com-

commentaries on its leading rules. Addison improved upon this model. But the critical harvest ripened slowly, and public periodical criticisms of the works of the learned, the presumption and proof of its extended influence, hardly found a general currency before the middle of the present century. They were preceded nearly a hundred years in France by the *Journal des Sçavans*, and the *Mercure Galant*, and above half that period in Germany by the *Acta Eruditorum* at Leipzig. *Les Memoires pour l'Histoire des Sciences, et de beaux Arts de Trevoux*, date with the present century; and the first work of this nature which has any claim to notice amongst us appeared twenty years after, and was the work of La Roche, a Frenchman.

But it is satisfactory to add, these days of disgrace are completely over, and within these last thirty years such efforts have been made both in biography and criticism as place our scholars in the very highest rank.

Almost every honour is theirs but priority in the attempt. . It is, a circumstance of particular gratification that the revival of letters, a subject so long neglected, is at length become such a favourite pursuit with the student, and such a favourite consideration with the public, that there is the fairest prospect of gradually obtaining an ample and satisfactory history. To co-operate with the scholars engaged in such an undertaking, or at all events to mingle in the crowd of its active friends, is the ambition of the author of the present tract. This will naturally call upon him for a few explanations, and he must, impolitically it is confessed, turn his readers attention from the splendid edifices and gay prospects of literary history to its humble lodge and unornamented outskirts.

In the First Part of this tract he has endeavoured to give a short historical and critical sketch of the decline of learning in the Roman empire, and followed it to a
period

period when its spirit subsided, and its very existence may be reasonably questioned. Need he say he means the tenth century? Three short chapters are employed in this discussion, which if it should not be deemed indispensably necessary to an introduction like the present, was yet too important to be wholly omitted, though there was little prospect of doing it justice.

In the Second Part he has entered on a more difficult task, and attempted at some length to explain and illustrate the principal causes to which in his opinion the re-appearance of learning may be properly attributed, its dawn in the eleventh, and an increasing radiance in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. For this seems the proper place to observe, that learning, however defined, the sciences, and in some respects the arts, had re-appeared before the age of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccace. To them we owe the introduction of classical studies, the first happy imitation of the

Roman authors, and what was yet more important, the first successful cultivation of their vernacular tongue. Nor will it be denied that their age was marked by a corresponding progress of rapidity and success in the polite arts. It is this splendid assemblage of merit which has caused *theirs* to be considered as the exclusive period of reviving letters, though with considerable injustice to the two preceding centuries. This distinction the Author flatters himself is just and accurate, and with those who look beyond the surface, who are aware of the *impossibility* of the instant reproduction of learning, will detract little from the splendour and value of that memorable period. It has too much solid and intrinsic property to shrink from the payment of just demands and equitable claims.—To have revived classical and polite composition is splendid praise.

These causes will admit of a commodious division.—1. The Arabian settlements in
Europe,

Europe, and their literary and scientific communications.—2. The Crusades in their effects on the manners, learning, romance, and poetry.—3. The introduction of the Roman Civil Law, together with the Canon Law, into our universities, schools, and tribunals.

The Third and last Part is designed to exhibit a view of the progress of learning thus assisted and advanced, during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Hence one chapter is dedicated to a statement of those political events, to which a literary influence may be properly ascribed, to an account of the patronage of the great, the establishment of universities, and the travels of scholars. The remaining one offers a sketch of the actual state of learning during that period, but more particularly at its close, under its general branches and divisions. In this attempt the clear and perspicuous method of Tiraboschi is adopted, and with it much of his various and well-digested

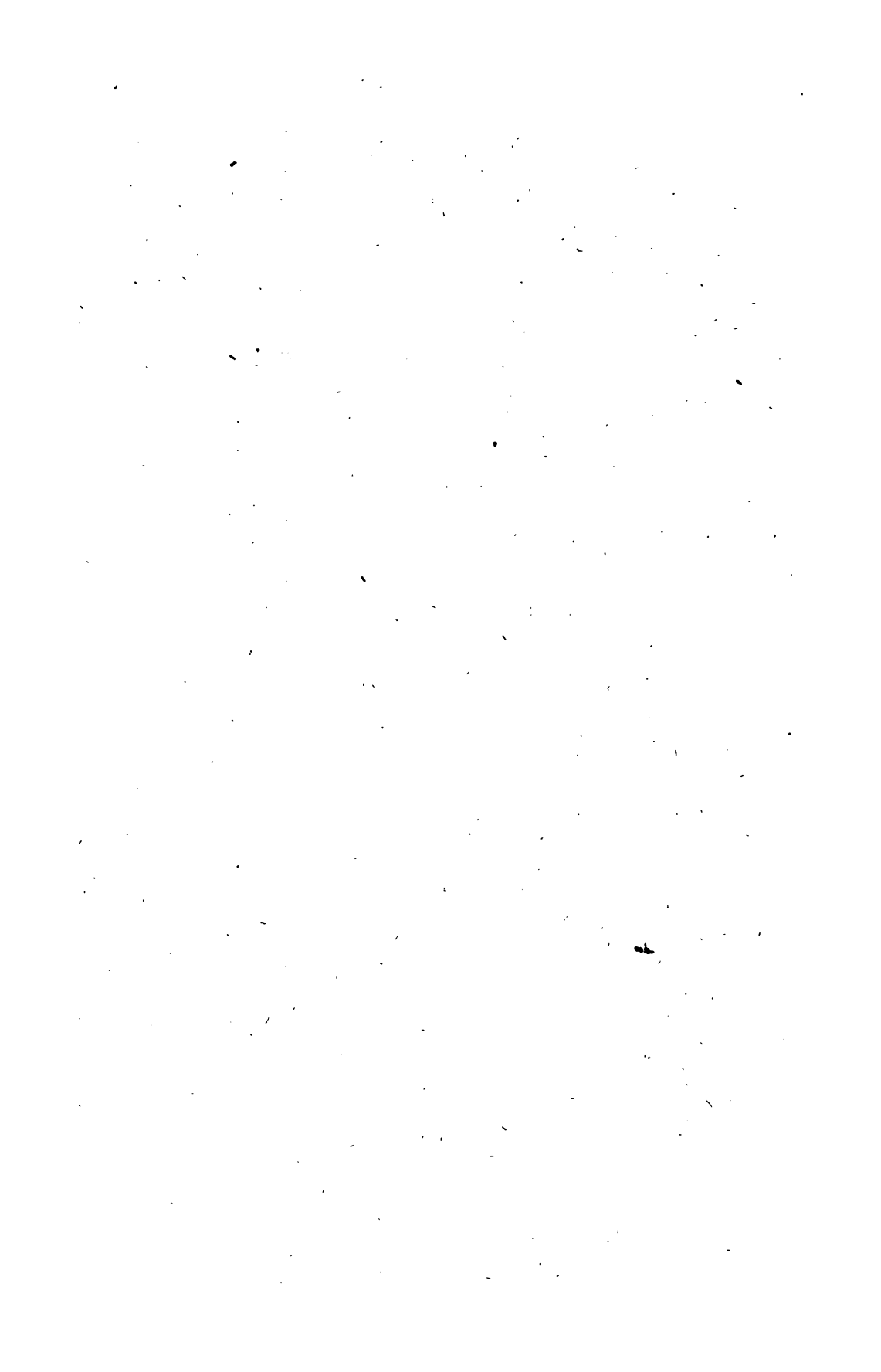
digested knowledge. Perhaps it would be difficult to suggest a better mode for arranging and discussing the abundant materials of the two next centuries.

Such are the subjects of the present discussion, important in themselves, and leading by a natural progress to the threshold of a greater undertaking. No one is more sensible of their importance than the Author, no one wishes more sincerely they had received an accurate and masterly investigation. But standing here in the light of preliminary considerations only, he has availed himself of a liberty authorised by such a supposition, has avoided the formality of citation and the parade of notes, and reviewed them rather as an observer and an essayist than as a critic and historian. Not that he is inclined to shrink from the acknowledgment of his obligations. He has perused or consulted several of the best authors, from whose labours he has derived much useful assistance, and is particularly

ticularly indebted to the French Benedictine history, Tiraboschi, and D'Herbelot. May he be permitted to add, that he believes there is no fact or opinion mentioned, and hardly an illustration offered, for which, if necessary, an authority or a reason might not, be assigned?

With these explanations the Author flatters himself he may venture to submit this imperfect essay to the public notice, and hopes it will be considered, agreeably to his idea and expectation, as an enlarged and not unuseful Preface to a Literary History of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries.

May 18, 1798.



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AN
INTRODUCTION
TO THE
LITERARY HISTORY
OF THE
FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES.

PART I.

Of the Decline of Learning in the ROMAN
EMPIRE, and of its State in EUROPE
during the Tenth Century.

CHAP. I.

*Probable Causes of the Decline of Learning
amongst the Romans—external and internal—
considered.*

THE object of the first part of this
Essay is to exhibit a short historical
and critical sketch of the decline of learn-
ing amongst the Romans, and to follow it

to the period of its greatest depression in the tenth century.

The reign of Augustus was undoubtedly the æra of its most successful cultivation ; but its glory was bounded by the life of its illustrious patron. The symptoms of declining taste may be observed in some of the authors of the Augustan age itself, and under Tiberius and his successors they ripen into gloomy and uncontroverted facts.

This great revolution appears to have been effected, partly by external and partly by internal causes ; by the former I mean the political events of the period, and the latter comprise those fluctuations of taste, sentiment, and fashion which daily produce such extraordinary changes in the literary world.—A short consideration of each will illustrate this opinion ; and a survey of the political misfortunes of the empire will furnish us, in the first instance, with some material reasons for the decline of learning.

I shall not enter into any detail of the history of the successors of Augustus, though it furnishes some anecdotes of literature and criticism.

criticism. A bloody and unremitting tyranny is its predominant characteristic, and Vespasian is the first who offers himself to notice as a patron of learning and a friend of genius. This merit is enhanced by the consideration of a life spent in military labours, a want of that learning he so liberally encouraged, and a parsimony in his general expences branded with the name of avarice. He first settled regular salaries on the professors of rhetoric, and numbers Quintilian amongst the objects of his choice and patronage. He invited to Rome the most celebrated poets and artists, adorned it with some monuments of splendid architecture, and dispensed his favours and rewards with truly Imperial liberality. Titus was not only a generous patron, but excites an interest as a literary character; he paid a close and successful attention to eloquence, was celebrated as a poet, and encouraged the polite arts with discernment and munificence. But how could the exertion of a few years repair the havoc of a century? Domitian surpassed the cruelty of his worst predecessors. Unacquainted

with philosophy, history, poetry, or eloquence, he directed the storm of his capricious tyranny against their professors; where it was out of his power to be cruel, he could at least be malignant; and when the lucky author escaped his vengeance, committed the works of obnoxious genius to the flames. This refinement of insult has been adopted into the public customs of Europe, and may sometimes have supplied the deficiencies of justice, but has oftener furnished gratification for private resentment.

The flattering phrase of the golden age, appropriated to the reign of Marcus Aurelius, might describe the succession of emperors from Nerva to Commodus, that period in the history of the world in which the condition of the human race is supposed to have been most happy and prosperous. In a literary view, its merits deserve a more particular notice than can be allotted to it here; but I cannot pass by the liberal and dignified conduct of Trajan. Bred to the profession of arms from his earliest youth, and ranking with the first generals of antiquity, he wanted
time

time and opportunity of acquiring learning, but he never wanted judgment to distinguish, nor munificence to reward those who possessed it: nor was his attention confined to the Roman scholar, but the literature and philosophy of Greece were patronised with equal liberality. It is this which ennobles his reign more than the striking monuments of his public labours, more than all his conquests. The latter ceased with the hand that made them; his bridges over the Danube and the Tigris have crumbled away, and the famous column which has stood sixteen hundred years less faintly images the superiority of his mind.

If we extend our view through this celebrated period, we shall confess that, after his reign, literature was less successfully cultivated, and patronage less munificently imparted. In the very character of his successors, their attachments and pursuits, a speculative inquirer might suggest very probable motives for this failure. The literary ambition and sanguinary jealousy of Adrian, the placid temper and indiscriminate liberality of Antoninus, the stern

and almost bigotted philosophy of Aurelius, these were qualities, it must be admitted, not eminently auspicious to the progress of genius and the cultivation of learning.

It is at least certain, that after the death of the latter, the empire no longer enjoyed any repose, nor did learning find any asylum till above a hundred years after, on the accession of Constantine. A quick and bloody succession of emperors, the desolation of civil wars, the daring inroads of the barbarous nations, these misfortunes cloud the political horizon. Of above thirty emperors, one half may be classed amongst the open or the concealed enemies of learning, amongst such as with the sword in their hands dealt themselves the most deadly blows, or amongst those who, without giving a direct order, could smile at the preventive cruelty of their confidants and executioners. A scanty half alone appears in the list of its friends; and of these, part were prevented from shewing their kindness by the shortness, part by the misfortunes of their reigns. Under Dioclesian and Maximian the empire respired a little ;
but

but they were both grossly illiterate, and, owing their elevation to arms, treated learning with a contempt which was disgraceful only to themselves.

Constantine the Great, with the disadvantage of an illiterate education, has an undoubted claim to the praise of patronage; nor are those of his laws yet forgotten, by which he secured competence and quiet to the professors of learning. The favours he dispensed were, however, of a general nature; and historians, poets, orators, and civilians stood on the same level, and experienced the same consideration. For the arts he had a better taste and a higher relish; and aiming to surpass Dioclesian, who had introduced Persian pomp and Oriental splendour, visibly improved upon his model in the grandeur of his buildings, the magnificence of his court, and the brilliancy of his festivals. But with these fair pretensions he inflicted a fatal wound on Roman learning. In removing the seat of empire, he was guided by political motives, or influenced by the splendid vanity of founding a metropolis. Little did he foresee how

that part of Roman taste and literature, which followed the fortunes of his court, would be gradually superseded by the address, the arts, and the language of Greece; and how the portion which remained would fall an inevitable prey to the incroachments and innovations of barbarism. These unexpected consequences, these involuntary mischiefs, we may lament, but can hardly censure.

If we contemplate the history of the empire from his death to its division, and onwards to its fall, a period exceeding a hundred years, we shall find in the character of its princes, and in every incident of its politics, the still increasing pressure of external causes. We shall see the lamented state swayed by monsters, invaded by barbarians, curtailed in its extent, pillaged in its property, and when foreign scourges were withheld, harassed by religious disputes, and torn by religious persecutions. Constantius, the successor of Constantine, was almost a persecutor of polite learning; emulation was repressed, eloquence mute, history neglected, poetry uncultivated, and philo-

philosophy displaced by magic. In his religious disputes he affected Arianism, and an ecclesiastical council was the narrow theatre of his grovelling ambition.

Julian was incontestably a man of first-rate abilities, had received a learned education, and in his studious pursuits united ardour with industry. He had paid particular attention to philosophy and eloquence, was trained to habits of composition, and wrote Greek with singular purity and facility. His example, as a man of letters, was obviously detrimental to the interests of *Roman* learning; as a patron, the course of his bounties ran exclusively in favour of the professors of paganism; and literature in other hands was overlooked or persecuted.—Under Valentinian and Valens the division of the empire took place, an event in its consequences equally injurious to Roman power and Roman learning, as it laid both completely open to the incursions of barbarism. And yet Valentinian himself was no less conspicuous for his literary, than his political and military talents. De-
1
furious

firm to extend and perpetuate the benefits of a learned education; he founded schools for grammar and rhetoric in the metropolis of each province; and in the laws and regulations by which they were governed, we may trace the rude outline of modern academical discipline.

Gratian gave almost as fair a promise as Titus himself. What might not have been expected from the maturity of his excellency, whose judgment called Theodosius to the empire, whose patronage animated Ausonius, and whose piety patronised St. Ambrose? The increasing difficulties and dangers of the times gave ample exercise to the virtues and the wisdom of Theodosius, and his death sealed the fate of the western division of the Roman empire. Under his unworthy son and successor Honorius, Rome was sacked by the Goths; the reins of government were feebly held by Valentinian the third; and from his murder, to the conquest of Italy by Odoacer, there was nothing to oppose to the approaching ruin of the empire and the extinction of letters.

And

And who can be surprised at their fate, when he reviews such a list of emperors, and considers such a train of misfortunes? Of the success and failure of learning in particular, we must attribute much to the direct influence of the Imperial character; in arbitrary governments the conduct and example of the sovereign operate, like the sun or the frost, to the expansion or the contraction of the buds of genius. Of the literary excellence of their respective periods a great portion is due to Augustus and Trajan; and Maximin and Elgabalus may thank themselves for the suspension of learning and the stagnation of genius. Even in free states the patronage of the supreme magistrate is sensibly felt, and no scholar is ignorant of the merits of Pericles, or denies the useful munificence of Lorenzo de Medicis. The four celebrated ages of taste and literature are marked by the names of their sovereign princes.

But enough has been said on those external causes by which learning was so deeply affected. It would far exceed the limits of my plan to state them with greater
pre-

precision, and my omission may be supplied by the reader's reflection. Let him add to the Imperial influence the removal of the seat of empire, the division of the empire, the accession of barbarous emperors, the influx of barbarous auxiliaries, an uninterrupted series of wars, foreign or civil. These he must consider as so many distinct calamities to the cause of learning; and however he may be inclined to appreciate them separately, he will not deny but their aggregate was in the highest degree oppressive and ruinous.

Heavy as this continued pressure was from external causes, it was increased and aggravated by internal misfortunes. Without a foreign impulse, literature began to degenerate, and the symptoms of its malady may be traced back to the most flattering periods of its health and vigour. Cicero, the brightest ornament of the Augustan age, is accused, and his friends deny rather than disprove the charge, of adopting the diffuse, or Asiatic style. Propertius certainly crowded his poetry with laborious mythology and far-fetched learning,
and

and his diction bears a strong cast of pedantry and affectation. Ovid stands convicted of incorrectness of style, extravagance of painting, and licentiousness of morals. The patavinity of Livy, though too delicate for the grossness of our classical perception, hurt the ears of the Roman critics, and was undoubtedly reprehensible. Vel-
 leius Paternulus the historian, who wrote about the middle of the next reign, was so sensible of this literary depravation, that he makes it a matter of serious discussion, while his own laboured periods are at once a commentary on his text, and an exemplification of his criticism. Indeed it did not demand the penetration of such an historian to observe this too conspicuous misfortune. It was impossible to look round without remarking the most striking instances. The Pollios, Asinius and Gallus, jealous of the fame of the great Roman orators, and conscious of their inferiority, had introduced a new taste in eloquence, and found flatterers and followers in the court, the senate, and the forum. Mæcenas, the leading patron of the times, had not formed his style,

style, if Seneca and Quintilian may be trusted, on the best models. Messala Corvinus was an instance of the most glaring affectation, and Tiberius prided himself on his pre-eminent station in the new oratorical school. The same Anti-Ciceronianism was still more successfully established in morals and philosophy by Seneca, whose merits and beauties covered, palliated, and at last recommended his defects. Lucan, and afterwards Statius, attempted to contest with Virgil the poetic crown. The arts felt the effects of the same innovating spirit; and Vitruvius, with all his taste, science, and execution, was insulted by his competitors, and almost disregarded by the public.

Learning, in its decline from Tiberius to the extinction of the western empire, seems to have experienced three stages where it found patronage and repose: the first was that of Trajan and the Antonines, the second that of Constantine, and the third may be referred to the reign of Theodosius. A few remarks on each must supply the place of a regular discussion.

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When the Augustan school closed its labours, the old road to literary eminence was immediately deserted, and new paths opened. True eloquence, if it did not die with Cicero, survived him only a short time. Ceasing to be useful, when Rome ceased to be free, it was no longer a political qualification, and quietly passed from the senate to the bar. The different objects of these stations will probably explain the future mediocrity of the oratorial pretensions; and while it shews us why Salvius Julianus ranks below Cicero, may perhaps afford a reason why our own legal speakers are so generally worsted by the orators of the British parliament.

A cursory review of the poets of this period authorizes the summary opinion, that their general characteristics are either affectation and tumidity, or frigidity and dulness: necessary consequences of their deviation on either side from the models of the first school. Lucan and Statius lose themselves in the clouds; Valerius Flaccus and Silius Italicus creep on the ground; Martial is frivolous, or frigid, and Persius ob-

obscure, or dull. Even Juvenal is rather a splendid declaimer than a genuine poet; and when we consider his subject, we must admit that his verses have too much of the tumid swell.

The prose-writers have undoubtedly great merit, but their style betrays marks of declining taste. Blemishes may be lost in the splendour of general excellences; but we cannot be insensible to the defects of Tacitus, nor deny that he was tainted with the prevailing vices of composition. Of Quintilian, both his own age and posterity have been justly proud; his genius, learning, and judgment are equally unquestioned and unquestionable; his days and his nights had been engrossed by the study of polite literature, yet even *he* sunk under this contagion. Cicero was his favourite author; to be pleased with Cicero was in his idea the promise and the presumption of merit; yet what a difference do we find in the language of these two great authors! Seneca, from whose meretricious allurements he cautions his unsuspecting pupils, seems insensibly to have won the affections, and almost

almost to have guided the pen of the master himself. The younger Pliny and Florus stand condemned for similar defects at the critical tribunal. Suetonius has failed by deviating into the opposite extreme, and the plainness of his style often degenerates into vulgarity and rudeness.

The polite arts and literature generally flourish and fade together, though the fate of the former is sometimes protracted by the munificence of the great or the luxury of a capital. To estimate the merits of cotemporary painters, we must search the works of poets and historians, the artists of a more durable commodity, and we shall find Pliny confessing and lamenting the degradation of *this* art. The statuary and the sculptor, however they may rely on the longer duration of their work, must finally depend for future fame on those whose monuments are more durable than marble and brass, and their report adds no laurels to their memory. The architect looks forward to a distant posterity with greater confidence and complacency, and the Coliseum will attest, that though his art might have lost

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the graceful simplicity of Vitruvius's hand, it still retained an imposing boldness and an impressive grandeur.

In marking the general appearances of literature from the age of the Antonines to the reign of Constantine, we cannot avoid being struck with the more obvious display of all the defects and vices of composition, aggravated by obstinacy, and confirmed by habit. The admirers of Seneca, Lucan, and Martial, found it easier to transplant their blemishes than imitate their excellencies, and wished rather to catch the splendour and glare of their colouring, than copy, as far as it could yet be found, the justness of conception and accuracy of drawing. Taste and literature seem to have suffered in each successive attempt; and were we to divide the whole space from Augustus to Constantine into two equal periods of time, we could not observe without surprise the difference in their respective degeneracy and deterioration. The writers in the first division rank, it is true, far below *their* predecessors of the Augustan school; but who will compare

pare Calphurnius and Nemesianus with Lucan and Statius? Tacitus must not be degraded by a comparison with any historian of the latter interval, and Suetonius himself rises far above the level of Spartianus, Capitolinus, and Lampridius.

If we proceed to take into consideration the last period ending in the destruction of the Western Empire, we shall find the decline of taste equally visible, and the degeneracy of language still more conspicuous. For this a particular reason occurs; Rome had been for a long time, at first, under a disguise somewhat plausible, a military government. To recruit her armies by barbarian troops was an expedient first employed by Augustus, and adopted by his successors with an eagerness proportioned to their more pressing exigencies. But during the last and fatal period of her power, when the spirit of antient Rome was extinct, the military establishment was almost entirely composed of strangers. Goths, Alans, Huns, and Gauls were huddled together, and their mingling jargons debased and almost destroyed the Roman language.

Written composition, it is true, was last affected by this misfortune ; but these barbaric infusions are strongly marked in the literary productions of the time. The progress of undulation extended at last from the centre to the extremest shore, and the scholar was affected as well as the peasant, the soldier, and the citizen. We may trace this in almost every page of St. Jerome, through all the warmth of his eloquence, all the pomp of his Ciceronian periods. St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and Pope Leo the First were undoubtedly men of powerful minds and extensive learning ; but they exhibit still stronger proofs of the corruption of language. Nor can a more favourable judgment be passed upon the more lineally descended classics, the partisans of Homeric deities and Pagan mythology. Servius was nothing more than a pains-taking grammarian ; Macrobius, a professed scholar and critic, was unable to use his own learning, or exemplify his own rules ; and Symmachus, a courtier, and a man of distinguished abilities, has not the least claim to elegance of diction or profundity of thought.

Claudian,

Claudian, himself a foreigner, seems born to rescue the age from general contempt, and in spirit and harmony ranks high amongst the Roman poets. As to Ausonius, Sidonius Apollinaris, and the galaxy of Transalpine scholars, which sheds a faint gleam on the last stage of Roman literature, they obtain by their number a distinction they could not claim by their merits, and the body forces those honours the individual did not dare to demand.

The arts sympathised with letters in these trying misfortunes. The most considerable efforts of architecture appear to have been exhausted in the two triumphal arches raised to the memory of Severus. Sculpture and engraving are kindred arts, and a proof of their degeneracy is furnished by the inspection of the Roman medals. Those struck under Caracalla and his successor Macrinus will bear no comparison with the issues of the first thirty emperors. Under Gallienus, who reigned about fifty years after, they degenerate into mere coin, without taste, meaning, or execution. The medals of Constantine are still more un-

worthy the name; and an incident, which occurred in his reign, paints stronger than a thousand well-turned sentences the melancholy state of the arts. When the Roman senate had decreed a triumphal arch to Constantine, they found themselves obliged, to rob that of Trajan of its principal ornaments to embellish this new structure; yet these ornaments were as distinct and appropriate in the former instance, as they were absurd and misplaced in the latter. To make the head of Trajan occupy the place of Constantine's, and to bring the Parthians into subjection to a general they had never seen, was a substitution disgraceful to the arts, and derogatory to the good sense of any period. Henceforward their cultivation in a great measure ceased, and they found enemies on the very spot they might have expected the most generous protectors; the ravages of the Goths were anticipated within the walls of the capital, the most beautiful edifices were levelled for the sake of their materials, and some Christian bigots thought they were wounding and defacing paganism, when they destroyed

stroyed the statues of their gods, or overthrew the columns of their temples.

But during this long descent of learning, through a period of four hundred years, was there nothing occurred to retard its progress, nothing to administer assistance, and delay its fate? It must be answered affirmatively, that in an early stage literature experienced a powerful aid from the civilians, and before its close from the theologians; that the age of Adrian produced the one, and the reign of Theodosius the other. These are facts too material to be overlooked, though from the plan of this work they can receive only a casual notice.

The study of the law was always a favourite with the Romans, and in every form of their government; but under Augustus and his successors it gained ground in public estimation. Salvius Julianus, by the order of Adrian, framed the perpetual edict, or a standing code, to extract the essence of preceding institutes, and exhibit an authentic body of salutary laws. His successors distinguished themselves by industry

and learning. Proficients in philology from the necessity of a close application to the most antient writers, they employed their knowledge to correct and refine their language. Well versed in the fashionable philosophy of Greece, they did not amuse themselves with the investigation of metaphysical subtilties, or the involution of moral precepts; but devoted their acquirements to define the rights and protect the property of their fellow-citizens. I need not insist how much such a body of writers must have done for the cause of learning, in counteracting the earlier affectation and the later barbarisms of contemporary authors. Even when the day of destruction came, they still furnished the most essential services. It was the diffusion of their writings over the provinces, and the use of the Roman jurisprudence in legal decisions, that served to preserve the memory and almost to embalm the purity of the Latin tongue. It must be stated as the leading cause, why, when Latin ceased to be a living language, it was still used through Europe for the purpose

purpose of composition, and became the common medium of literary and scientific communication ; and its advantages on the revival of letters are so important, as to demand a particular discussion in the course of this work.

Nor was the cause of learning less powerfully supported by the Christian writers. During the first century, the propagation of our religion was entrusted to a higher agency than human abilities ; when Providence ceased to interest itself so directly in its behalf, the Christian scholar cultivated with no ordinary success the powers of reason and the gifts of learning. The second and third centuries are distinguished by a crowd of eminent writers ; never were dialectics more skilfully employed, nor philosophy pressed into a better service, nor eloquence used with a more brilliant effect. Tertullian, though he cannot be classed with the best authors of the age of the Antonines, possessed a rough but flowing eloquence, was well versed in the philosophy of the times, and a master of its polite literature. In Minutius Felix he found

found a formidable rival, or a happy imitator. Arnobius does not sink beneath the level of their composition, and Cyprian rises above it by the noblest efforts of eloquence and learning.

But it was in the fourth century, when the language was almost lost in a corrupt and barbarous dialect, that the Christians proved its last and truest friends, and took a distinguished lead in literary pursuits and philosophical studies. The emperors wisely encouraged a spirit of emulation amongst them, founded schools, erected libraries, and lavished honours on the most eminent scholars. That they far excelled their Pagan opponents has never been denied. Hilary of Poitiers was an able and fluent writer, and Lactantius has often been compared and once preferred to the first name in Latin eloquence. St. Ambrose was a learned and powerful composer. To mention the name of St. Jerome is to convey the idea of a laborious, profound, animated, and eloquent author. No one will dispute the merits of St. Augustine; and Sulpicius Severus, the Christian Sallust, claims equal

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commendation for the orthodoxy of his doctrine and the latinity of his style.

Of these writers it is not too much to say, that their labours were eminently serviceable at this period of their exertion, and they have the merit of supporting the cause of learning to the very last moment that it was tenable. With the civilians, the theologians may claim the honour of contributing to preserve the existence and introduce the written use of Latin, after it ceased to be a vernacular tongue, to the notice of Europe. The celebration of their ritual in that language was, perhaps, alone sufficient to keep its embers alive for a splendid though a late revival.

C H A P. II.

Inroads of the barbarous Nations—Effects.—Italy under the Heruli and Ostrogoths.—Cassiodorus.—Invasion of the Lombards.—Gregory the Great.—Different Fate of Greek and Roman Learning.

SUCH seem to be the principal causes to which we may attribute the decline of learning amongst the Romans, and which might gradually have overwhelmed and absorbed their talents and genius. But a more fatal and accelerating cause was at hand in the irruptions of the barbarous nations from the north of Europe and the north-west of Asia. Their inroads, at first desultory, ripened in the fourth century into extensive and permanent invasions; and in the sixth, they had dismembered and almost destroyed the Roman empire. Their progress was marked by unexampled rapine, carnage, and desolation; and Europe, in these dreadful revolutions, was shaken to its very foundations.

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As governments are now, and have been for some time constituted, it is possible that conquest may bring with it some advantages to compensate for its indispensable evils: but these barbarous hordes, subsisting upon the chase, pasturage, or spoil, had no agriculture, no industry, no traffic, no mechanical or domestic arts. The portrait of the antient Germans, as described by Tacitus, would represent with a flattering pencil the image of the Goth or the Hun. Such minds could not be brought to frame the idea of learning and the pacific arts, unaccompanied with the resolution to despise and the wish to destroy them. But for the casual intervention of one of their most decided enemies, this Gothic tempest must have uprooted and swept them from the earth. This enemy, or, to give it in the present instance a juster appellation, this friend was superstition.

This travelled with them from the dens and fastnesses of the North. The dread of their fancied gods had introduced a timid deference for their ministers; and when the sword opened a road into new countries,
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they transferred this reverential feeling to the sacerdotal order whom they found established there. Reverence for the person of the priest extended itself to the security of his property ; and while the palace and the castle were wrapt in flames, the vicarage and the convent escaped. It was thus within the pale of the church alone that Learning found shelter and repose, and six centuries at least elapsed before she ventured forth, and was reinstated in her public honours.

Whether the clergy fully availed themselves of these advantages, I presume not to determine ; it would appear they did not labour to much effect, either in the cause of religion or of learning. We might, perhaps, pardon them for accommodating the ritual and ceremonial observances of the church to the rude ideas of barbarians : but their system of doctrine and their code of morals, the object of faith and the duties of virtue, ought not to have been reduced to the same ignominious level. Christianity ought not to have been disgraced, metamorphosed, and travestied to conciliate any votaries, to answer any end, to produce
any

any effect: yet this is a charge which adheres to their memory.

In a literary view, their labours and their influence might have been serviceable in preserving the Latin as a living and established language, if not amongst their barbarian conquerors, at least amongst their fraternities; in the church, the school, and the cloister. But the reverse took place; instead of teaching a language, they became themselves content to learn a jargon; and the rude tones of the northern forests supplanted the phrases of Virgil and Horace, which at the beginning of the seventh century were unknown, or were at least disused, in Rome itself. This was the death-blow to the Latin as a living language.

Its purer and less vital parts, the productions of its immortal authors, happily found a shelter in those convents, which a mistaken piety had just erected over a considerable part of Europe, and which the rapacity of these barbarians was taught to spare. Manuscripts, thrown together by accident, gradually accumulated into libraries. The abbots grew proud of possessions,
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which they were disposed to value, though unable to use ; a part of the fraternity was employed in copying the originals, and amid the disorders of the times learning received this silent and useful homage. To their obscure and humble diligence, the learned of every subsequent period have been deeply indebted ; and no scholar of the eighteenth century would refuse them his acknowledgments, if they had not sometimes defaced a poem or an oration to transcribe a legend or a missal.

In comparing for a moment the literary employment of the *same* order of men in distant ages, one can hardly imagine a more striking difference than the quiet transcription of manuscripts they did not understand, at one period, and the composition of the literary history of their country from the earliest antiquity, in another. Yet thus differently occupied were the French Benedictines of the seventh and of the present century. It is painful to add that a sanguinary and fatal revolution has terminated their labours, absorbed their property, and annihilated their

their order. But no revolution can destroy their learned labours, and scholars yet unborn will acknowledge their merits and lament their fate. Nay, even their humble and ignorant predecessors may appeal to the grateful notice of posterity, with the powerful claims of charity and good works. Their hospitable gates were ever open to distress, and furnished at once an asylum and social worship; the poor and laborious found bread and employment; many useful inventions may be traced back to their cloyster; and their humanity soothed the evils of war and the ravages of barbarism.

While every part of Europe lay struggling under the yoke of these rude conquerors, that honoured portion is more particularly to be regretted which had subdued the world by arms, and civilized it by arts; and which, as the source and centre of learning, will demand at our hands a more particular account of its fate. Successively overrun by the Heruli and Ostrogoths, capriciously defended by the Greeks, often plundered by its defenders, Italy became the prey of every human calamity. The possession of

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the Heruli, it is true, was bounded by twenty years; but it was twenty years of havock and devastation. The Ostrogoths hardly exceeded seventy; but the last thirty were memorable for the bloodiest war in its records, in which the invaders were at last expelled; or rather exterminated by Narfes.

Cassiodorus.

The sufferings of learning are more easily imagined than detailed; and its last sighs seem to meet the ear of the classical reader. But if a stand could have been made against the tide of barbarism; if by precept or example the mind could have been re-animat^d in the cause of reason and science, Cassiodorus would have performed this task; and his genius and virtue shed a lustre on one of the darkest periods of Italian history. Theodorick, the Ostrogoth, had the native good sense, for he possessed no literature though he had resided at the court of Constantinople, to employ him as his minister; and what was yet more important, to be governed by his advice. Hence religion was revered, the laws enforced, the civil offices filled with learned men, colleges opened

opened for the instruction of the young, and pensions distributed for the remuneration of the old. This spirit of well judged patronage produced a visible effect on learning and the arts; they revived from their slumbers, and might have started into life, if the increasing misfortunes of the times and new scenes of terror had not again condemned them to obscurity and silence. When civil wars, and the invasion of Belisarius left Cassiodorus no hope of performing farther service, he retired to Monte Cassino, a monastery founded in the better days of his fortune; and there, by collecting an ample library, by diffusing copies of antient manuscripts, by verbal instructions, written lectures, and voluminous productions, he closed a long and honourable life in the service of religion and learning.

Symmachus and Ennodius his contemporaries are entitled to respectable notice; but Boëthius possessed extraordinary merit. As a poet and a moralist his pages are still interesting to the classical reader and the lover of truth; though he was more known and

celebrated in his own age as a theologian and a Peripatetician. The little philosophy of the middle ages was transcribed from his works; he had carefully meditated, and faithfully translated Aristotle, and may claim the honour, if in the present day it should be considered such, of having first introduced him to the public notice of the west. Probably it may exalt his character more to observe that he was one of the few learned men, who did not disdain to accommodate his great talents to general use; and if his moral and philosophical works are written for men, he could humble himself to translate for children an elementary treatise of science. These merits are endeared to us by the recollection of his sufferings, by the mildness of his virtues, and the perseverance of his religion. His death tarnishes the memory of Theodorick, and may serve as a melancholy æra to fix the fate of the Latin language. Boëthius was the last of the Romans.

Invasion of
the Lom-
bards.

One would suppose the invasions of barbarous nations must present the same dull and disgusting uniformity; but upon the whole,

whole, the irruption of the Lombards seems marked by more aggravating circumstances; and if their ignorance was not more profound, their cruelty was more atrocious. Besides, to complete the miseries of Italy, a perpetual war subsisted between these ferocious invaders and the Greeks; and that country alike unhappy in its friends or foes, was successively the prey of the contending parties. Let St. Gregory be heard, when he describes the Lombards. "This ferocious nation is come upon us like a tempest, and thundering on our defenceless heads has stripped our cities, demolished our fortresses, destroyed our monasteries, and almost exterminated the inhabitants. Our fertile fields have no longer cultivators or proprietors; and places once populous are occupied and defiled by beasts of prey." In one of his homilies or harangues, publicly delivered to the Roman people, he opens more particularly the scene of distress in the neighbourhood of his metropolis. "We know," says he, "that Agilulphus has passed the Po, and hastens forward to the siege of

" Rome. Nothing is seen on every side
 " but distress, nothing heard but groans and
 " lamentations. The cities are destroyed, the
 " fortresses dismantled, the country given
 " up to pillage. Yet in this scene of distress,
 " amid fields without cultivators, and towns
 " without defenders, new dangers, new
 " terrors threaten these miserable remains.
 " Oh! my brethren, in this complication of
 " misery, what is there to attach us to
 " life?" This is followed by a truly me-
 lancholy picture of the internal situation of
 the once proud mistress of the world. " She
 " is reduced to the most deplorable situation
 " by the various calamities she has suf-
 " fered from the fury of her enemies, and
 " the ravages of barbarians. Where is
 " her senate, where her people? Where the
 " splendour of her magistrates? All is lost
 " and swept away. Our population is
 " dwindled to an inconsiderable number,
 " and the sword of the enemy, aided by
 " innumerable miseries, makes a daily dimi-
 " nution. Nor is it men alone that perish;
 " the public edifices, the monuments of
 " our antient grandeur; these are dropping
 " every

“every day into ruin. There was a time
 “when the youth of foreign countries
 “crowded these walls to learn the sciences,
 “and claim their rewards. Alas! no one
 “repairs now for instruction or advance-
 “ment to a city, which resounds only with
 “lamentation, and which is, in fact, no
 “better than a desert.”

With some allowance for the periods of the orator, and more for the feelings of an individual, St. Gregory having been a party and a sufferer in these outrages on humanity, we must conclude, whatever difference of opinions may since have subsisted amongst historians, that nothing but truth could have furnished this melancholy picture. The Lombards, we know, extended their fury to objects, which their rude predecessors had invariably respected; the sacerdotal character was now a feeble protection, and convents no longer escaped devastation. Learning felt the shock in her most vulnerable part; for the monastic libraries were in general ravaged; and if the wise or selfish monks, who sought a refuge in other kingdoms had not loaded

themselves with the precious luggage of manuscripts, letters might have been forever destroyed in Europe.—This iron race seems to have been unsoftened, even by the charms of peace. Of the Lombard sovereigns who reigned in Italy, and of the little princes and dukes who shared the spoils of the feudal division into which it was occasionally thrown, not one had in any sense the least pretensions to literature, or exhibited the least disposition to patronage. Theodorick, the Ostrogoth, was an Augustus in comparison with Alboin and his descendants.

For two hundred years was Italy doomed to this state of intellectual and moral depression, till the arms of Charlemagne before the close of the eighth century gave it a generous master, and founded the new empire of the west. Rome, it is true, had escaped the Lombard dominion; but the horrors of a perpetual siege can alone convey an adequate idea of its distressed situation. In casting our eye back through the whole of this disastrous period, Gregory seems the only man, who deserves, I will
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not say, the epithet of Great, but who can claim any notice for force of mind or vigour of intellect, for the possession of any learning or the display of any genius. In the bold and masculine outline of his character all pencils agree; yet so imperfectly and confusedly are the transactions of his age recorded, that it is to this day a doubt with some inquirers, whether the sciences, with the exception of theology, did not find in him a determined enemy; whether he did not persecute classical learning and interdict its study; whether with more than Gothic fury he did not destroy the valuable libraries of antiquity, and level with the ground the most splendid monuments of Roman art. In this doubt or dispute, it is safer and wiser to adopt the neutrality of Bayle, than to contend with the historian of Italian literature*, or the author of the history of philosophy†. As a writer he was voluminous; his style flows with an exuberance of coarse eloquence, and smacks, it must be confessed, very strongly of the times; but when his disadvantages are

Gregory the
Great.

* Tiraboschi.

† Brucker.

taken into consideration, he has, perhaps, of the long list of popes, the fairest pretensions to the honoured titles of the scholar, the orator, and the man of genius.

But if Gregory be the only name, which in this gloomy period Italy could boast; and if learning thus suffered in the centre of her exertions, what could be expected in more distant and more ungenial situations? Distress and almost ruin had passed over all the provinces of her former empire. Spain had been over-run by the Visigoths, and was now contested by them and the Arabians. England had been conquered, oppressed, and parcelled out among the Saxons. France, a prey to feudal anarchy and civil commotions, saw the mayors of the palace usurp the reality, and soon assume the name and the splendours, of royalty. As to Germany, it was in a great measure unenlightened by Christianity, more particularly in the northern parts, and split into a variety of small independent states, which were convulsed by unremitting jealousies, and exhausted by diurnal wars. Such was the melancholy state of Europe
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in the seventh and eighth centuries; and no perspicacity can discover in such a chart any spot favourable to the production of genius, or the cultivation of letters.—The leaden sceptre of ignorance seemed now completely extended over the west.

While for near five centuries this dreary view exhibits itself to the reader of European history, Grecian literature happily affords a more cheering prospect. When with us the name of philosophy was scarcely known, and the scraps of Boëthius satisfied our intellectual cravings, the Greeks approached the pure sources of Platonism, and held the master-key to the difficulties of the Peripatetician. In the sixth and seventh centuries, so fatal to Roman genius, polite learning was not only successfully cultivated; but the profound and solid sciences maintained their ground. History, poetry, eloquence, and criticism were well understood in their principles, and well illustrated in composition; while with us the most despicable essays, without the shadow of a resemblance, assumed their name, and often carried off their rewards. In the tenth century,

century, that fatal period of European ignorance, whose consideration will occupy our next chapter, we find many names of literary eminence adorning the Byzantine annals. During the twelfth and thirteenth, several of their sovereigns were, what all sovereigns ought to be, munificent patrons, and what so few sovereigns are, distinguished scholars; and the leading writers of the same period have pretensions, at once to taste and elegance, to profound learning and deep research.

Different
fate of
Greek and
Roman
learning.

In the fate and fortunes of Greek and Roman learning, there is a striking and memorable difference. The former began to flourish very early; the age of Homer and Hesiod carries us up to a remote antiquity, and even that of Alexander precedes above three hundred years the Augustan period. The decline of Roman learning may be considered as completed in the course of five centuries. On the contrary, when Greek learning had passed its meridian, it continued in a resplendent and hardly perceptible wane; was never seen to set; was never immersed in total darkness.

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On the revival of letters, to continue our figure, it was transferred to another hemisphere, and increased the lustre and brilliancy of that auspicious event. If we except the age of Trajan and the Antonines, there appears in the Roman literary temper no disposition to resist misfortune, and it received like a slave, without a struggle, the destiny that was prescribed to it. But the Grecian genius, so far from submitting to external pressure, was continually exerting itself, and nobly rallied from time to time. The observer, who thinks he can trace unequivocal marks of its declension in one century, is surprised with great and splendid exertions in the next, while each century in the survey of Roman literary history forms a fresh stage in its progress to a certain dissolution.—That event, in all probability, was accelerated by a want of communication with Greece, with its learned men, and its invaluable volumes. From the reign of Theodorick, or more certainly from the establishment of the Lombards, the knowledge of Greek seems almost entirely to have ceased in the west, and the fall of learning
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has the same date. Both began to revive at the same period; and while Dante, Petrarch, and Boccace offer the first specimens of classical composition in the Latin tongue, Barlaam and Leontius Pilatus awakened the desire of scholars towards Greek, and paved the way for their greater successors, before and after the fall of Constantinople, for Chrysoloras, and Gaza, for Argyropylus, and Lascaris.

C H A P. III.

Charlemagne.—Alfred.—Invasions of the Normans and Arabians.—Government.—Religion.—Laws of the Tenth Century.—Scarcity of Books.—Sylvester the Second.—Literary Pretensions of England.

THROUGH another chapter we must yet trace the history of the misfortunes of learning. Charlemagne, indeed, at the close of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth century, made a noble stand against the invasions of barbarism, and the encroachments of ignorance; but with considerably more effect against the former than the latter. Whether he himself had any pretensions as a scholar has been disputed; but as he was taught grammar, which had then an extensive signification, by Peter of Pifa, and could relish the society of Alcuin, the balance inclines evidently in his favour. But whether he possessed learning or not, he was a good judge

Charle-
magne.

judge and a generous patron of those who did. He founded schools, and pensioned scholars, admitted them to his cabinet, and associated them to his table. His munificence is well known. Peter of Pifa, Paul the deacon, Paulinus the patriarch of Aquileia, Theodulf bishop of Orleans, men of letters, now unknown, but eminent in their day, were rewarded with unsparing liberality. As to Alcuin, whose name, if not his merits, is more familiar to us, he will be thought gratified to the full extent of his merits, in the possession of three abbeys and twenty thousand slaves. The more valuable gift of a daughter crowned the superior pretensions of Eginhart, his secretary and biographer.

The patronage of this great man was extended over France, Italy, and Germany; and he seems to have wished to make the dominion of science as universal as his own. Neither in this nor in any other leading traits of the public character does the new emperor of the west rank behind the antient Cæsars. The Italian writers, with the spirit of petty patriotism, deny his introduction of

learning into their country, and dispute his foundation of their university of Pavia. Perhaps both these points, perhaps the very circumstance of his having founded the university or school of Paris, may be disputable; but their general belief is an honourable attestation to the spirit and extent of his munificence. Our Alfred emulated, and in some respects exceeded this example. His zeal to encourage, and his liberality to reward learning, with more contracted means and in a narrower sphere, were at least equal to those of his predecessor: as a scholar, an author, a man of genius, he evidently surpassed him; and might have claimed the literary monarchy, not of his own country only, but of Europe.

These were truly illustrious actions; but the exertions and merits of individuals were again doomed to be lost and overborne in the increasing dangers and difficulties of the times. Scarcely could a reasonable hope be entertained of these Gothic governments acquiring order and stability, when fresh tribes of barbarians made their appearance from the old and yet unexhausted

Alfred.

Invasions
of the Nor-
mans.

storehouse of nations. Their numbers appear to have suffered little diminution ; but they chose a different element for their exploits, better calculated for sudden invasion and expeditious retreat. The Normans, a name which includes Scandinavia and the shores of the Baltic, free-booters and pirates, from the owners of ships became the masters of fleets, extended their visits of slaughter and depredation, and kept the most powerful kingdoms of the west in a state of terror and alarm. Charlemagne saw, dreaded and repressed their power ; his death was the signal for bolder and better concerted attempts. In half a century they fought their way from the mouth of the Seine to the gates of Paris ; and in thirty years more founded the duchy or rather the independent kingdom of Neustria or Normandy. Under the name of Danes, they enlarged to the cost of this country the circle of their visits ; and though Alfred defeated them, they gained from his feeble successors a short possession of the English sceptre. In the eleventh century, their triumphs received fresh splendour from

from the settlement of victorious colonies, and the foundation of permanent kingdoms.

But while the north and the west were thus harassed by the followers of Woden, it was pressed on the south and the east by the enthusiasts of Mahomet, foes as sanguinary and desperate. In France, the bloody victory of Tours had stopped their progress; but Charlemagne found it impossible to repel them from their European settlements; the course of his victories was suspended by their arms, and a retreating army from Roncevaux, with the death of Roland, was the signal of defeat and disgrace. Spain had been conquered by them; Italy was the theatre of their daily ravage; Rome itself insolently besieged, and Sicily, in great part, under their dominion. Trouble, tumult, and desolation mark the century after the death of Charlemagne.

The Arabians.

But of evils and misfortunes there will be an excess, and in time there must be the end. At length the tide of barbarism was spent, and external ravages ceased; but four centuries of disorder had in a great

measure changed the face of Europe, and their full effects are visible in the tenth century. The degrading epithets of the obscure, the dark, the iron age, will convey a faint idea of its intrinsic ignorance and wretchedness; and one should turn with disgust from the consideration of its enormities, if it were not attended with the reflection, that the last point of deterioration was passed, and that every future change must be an improvement. Our subject will call upon us to offer a few observations upon the most disgraceful period of European history.

Govern-
ment, re-
ligion, and
laws of the
tenth cen-
tury.

The conquests and establishments of the barbarians seem uniformly to have subsided in the feudal government, which sprung naturally from their precarious situation, and was founded on the narrow basis of self-defence. To this every other idea, hope, and prospect, were sacrificed. Nothing, however, can be imagined more incontestably repugnant to the genius of improvement. It established over Europe the dreadful oriental system of casts, struck at the root of royalty, or rather all legal subordination,

ordination; perpetuated slavery, scattered the seeds of civil war, and in the result deluged every kingdom with blood.—If we suppose for a moment, genius alive and emulation active, what could letters do in such governments as these, and while the sword opened the only road to distinction, what could follow but the silence or the extinction of learning?

Nothing more favourable can be said of the religion of the tenth century; which, indeed, deserves not the name.—A plain and rational creed, an excellent system of morals, and a decent and interesting ceremonial, the best legacy of the fourth century, were superseded and supplanted by the union of the most absurd doctrines, with the most ridiculous rites; and the association of the most desperate crimes, with the most

• abject and superstitious credulity. Nor was their jurisprudence of a higher stamp. The barbarians, when they first migrated from their forests, seem to have taken upon themselves to determine individually on the nature of injuries, and on modes of punishment; and to have reserved to their own

hands the office of executing private and even public justice.

To this succeeded a system more gratifying to the rich and great; I mean pecuniary compensation, which established a tariff of crimes, and put the life of every man into *his* hands who would pay the stipulated price. The inadequacy or the injustice of these expedients gave rise to a variety of codes in different parts of Europe; and these again, from their complexity and difficulties, produced, as a shorter mode, decisions, which were called the Judgments of God; and which, in fact, were a direct appeal to his justice, and an open demand of his immediate interference. I need not say how well they were calculated for the ignorance and superstition of the tenth century; but amongst these the duel, as it cut the Gordian knot of legal difficulties with the greatest expedition, and was accommodated to the martial spirit of the age, experienced in every country the most general adoption. Even when letters revived, and good sense had abolished the other judgments of God, this military appeal was still grateful to the
remaining

remaining spirit of chivalry, and the last that retired before the rational dignity of the Roman laws.

With such governments, religion, and laws, how could learning subsist, and in what class of society could it hope for cultivation, or even for respect? Not amongst the great and the rich, the rival robbers and licensed banditti of a country, intent on ravage and revenge, whose very amusements and recreations were tinged with barbarism and sensuality. A still less chance was there for its reception in the lower orders of life, who were either the abject slaves of these haughty barons, the associates of their arms, or the companions of their table. Repulse or disrespect was all that learning could expect from the secular clergy, who were barely a remove above their barbarous hearers, delighted with them in the amusements of the field, and shared with them the spoils and the booty of a military life. The monastic orders themselves, grown rich and luxurious, had relaxed from the wholesome severity of their original institutions. The tiara crowned

the brows of monsters and savages. The broken and imperfect records of the times are too full of the crimes and profligacy of the Roman pontiffs, too luminous in the display of such atrocities as disgrace humanity. The names of the makers of popes, of Theodora and Marozia, are conspicuous in this rubric of infamy; and if a female pontiff was the fiction of a succeeding age, the present was disgraced by more serious and more dreadful misfortunes.

Scarcity of
books.

Amidst these complicated distresses, learning must have been inevitably destroyed, but for the refuge it found in the cloyster, and for the preservation of its choicest volumes in the conventual libraries, for better days and better service. That the possessors were ignorant of their use and value, might be inferred from a thousand circumstances, when all France could not furnish a complete copy of Tully's *de Oratore*, and Quintilian's *Institutions*; and when more legal forms and precautions were used to secure the return of a book than the repayment of a loan. One would suppose that the art
of

of transcription must have almost perished ; since, for works better adapted to the taste of the age, for a miserable collection of homilies, a price was asked and given, that would have half-clothed the walls of the Bodleian. This avowed scarcity of books, this dearth of intellectual subsistence might be regretted, could we ascribe it to any other cause than to the incurious, torpid, and ignorant habits of the time. Three centuries after, when the literary spirit of Europe was awakened, transcribers appeared, books readily found their way into the hands of scholars, and were no longer suffered to moulder in the cell.

If there were libraries which were thus put to no use, so were there schools employed to very indifferent purposes. Of these Charlemagne had been a liberal founder; his example had been diligently followed, and at this very period, there was not a convent, a cathedral, and hardly a church of eminence without one; but within the walls of these seminaries little was taught that tended to make the pupil a useful citizen or a happy individual. An education for the purposes of active life shared

none

none of their solicitude, and indeed a master of arms had been the most appropriate tutor. The contemplative student, the philosophical character, this was a being foreign to their idea, and perhaps above it. The only professions subsisting were the military and the theological; those destined for the former seldom frequented, or soon left these schools, for a better academy in the baronial hall; the latter continued long in the trammels of discipline; and if they did not leave them wiser and better, their instructors only are to blame.

There is too much reason to fear they were.—Their theology, so far as for merit or for use it deserved the name of science, might have been compressed into a narrow compass and an inglorious manual. They had contentedly sunk beneath their predecessors, and were satisfied with the scantiest gleam of evangelical light. But though this circle of their inquiry was voluntarily narrowed, though they attended little to religion as a system of belief, and still less as a scheme of morality, nothing could exceed their minute diligence in discussing and discharging its ritual

ritual and ceremonial observances. To perform a part in their splendid drama demanded close observance and long experience. The knowledge of church music became an important acquisition and the honourable reward of ten years vigils. The Gregorian chant, with dignity and fullness, had brought difficulty; and the invention of Guy d'Arezzo was yet wanting to smile on the choir, and smoothe the road to musical eminence.

If more than this was taught in their schools, persons of the highest rank would surely have been able to write; and Alfred would never have complained that the clergy, the only students of the age and country, were scarcely able to read their breviaries.—But a few stars glimmered, even in this night. Two characters, at least, travelled out of the pale of theology into the plain of general learning. In Luitprand we see a proficient in the Greek and Saxon languages, a politician, a traveller, an orator, and an historian; and Gerbert, who in point of general knowledge excelled his cotemporaries, surpassed as a mathematician many
of

Luitprand
and Ger-
bert.

of his successors. The former was bishop of Cremona; the latter, under the name of Sylvester the second, enjoyed, and merited the prouder distinction of the tiara. This extraordinary man, impelled by a thirst for science, left his home and country at an early period of life, and, when travelling had few comforts, visited a great part of Europe; but it was Spain alone could teach him what he wanted to know. There his mathematical talent and his thirst for science were amply gratified; and not being less ready to communicate, than he was eager to acquire learning, he founded, on his return, a school at Bobbio in Italy, and another at Rheims in France. Both were numerously attended, and far surpassed in utility all rival seminaries. In his papacy, obtained for him by his pupil Otho the third, he continued his love for learning; and in his expence for manuscripts, and his generosity to scholars, we trace a hasty liberality bordering on profusion. He was charged with magic by ignorance or envy, and the speaking brazen head was first attributed to him, which successively became the envied property of
Grosse.

Groffe-tete, friar Bacon, and Albertus Magnus.

Of those students who, ranking beneath these heroes, still aspired to eminence above the common reach, and who were content to pay the price of severer application, few rose in their highest flights above the elements of modern learning. Not many efforts of genius and application presumed beyond the seven liberal arts; and the trivium, or three humblest, was the object and the limit of ordinary adventure. So low were the sciences and the arts reduced. It is useless to inquire whether polite or classical literature any longer existed. The Latin language was almost disused, and the floating jargons of the barbarians had not been yet collected into form, and methodized by rules. When the Latin was used, in the hands of such writers as then held the pen, it would necessarily exhibit those depravations and barbarisms which Ducange has recorded and explained. Hector, before the Grecian fleet, and Hector when he appeared to Æneas, will present a just and striking image of its former honours and its present fall.

fall. But it is not necessary to dwell on these points; a review of the whole period, from the seventh to the eleventh century, and in it the tenth is most conspicuously disgraceful, will authorise us to adopt the opinion of an elegant writer and profound inquirer. "Europe," says Dr. Robertson, "did not produce during these four centuries any author who deserves to be read, either on account of the elegance of his composition, or the justice and novelty of his sentiments."

Between literature and the polite arts, there exists so intimate a connection, that to sketch the history of the one is to describe the fate of the other. Hence in this period the arts seem to have stood on the very edge of dissolution, and indeed with the exception of Italy entirely disappeared. There they were kept principally alive by the patronage of the popes and the munificence of the clergy; and no specimens of the arts can be found out of the church and the monastery. Some Gothic structures, in which neither labour nor expence was spared, and taste alone was wanting, a little

little indifferent sculpture, and a few painted windows, these form the material labours of the artists of the tenth century; but have not been able to preserve their names from a deserved oblivion. Out of Italy we look in vain; no arts existed beyond the Alps.

This, I am sensible, is a faint sketch of the decline of Roman learning, an imperfect memorial of the degradation and degeneracy of the tenth century; but it was necessary to complete the plan of this essay; and I may call upon the memory or the imagination of my reader to supply any omission of facts, or any defect of execution. I hope to stand excused from the charge of useless curiosity, if, in closing these preliminary observations, I direct a cursory notice to the literature of our own country.

I am afraid the truth of history will not permit me to exempt it from the charge of general and profound ignorance. In looking back to a distant antiquity, whatever the zeal of patriotism may suggest about the state of Irish learning or however Scotland may yet exult in the venerable foundation

Literary
pretensions
of England.

foundation of St. Columba, every prudent Englishman will refrain from any ill-timed boasts on the side of his country. We may quietly leave at an obscure distance the political and sacerdotal empire of the Druids, their scientific, legislative, and even their poetical pretensions; about which, indeed, enough is only known to afford room for plausible conjecture, or furnish subjects for dramatic embellishment. History authorises the reasonable opinion that when England was invaded by Cæsar, it was in a state rude, uncultivated, a degree only above barbarism itself. As the Romans carried their arts with their arms, and improvement soothed the evils of devastation, it became necessarily a gainer in arts, sciences, and general civilization. Still it must be confessed, that during the four centuries the Romans were established here, when their literature was familiar, and their language naturalized in the country, none of our scholars acquired eminence, contended with their instructors, or even rivalled their neighbours the French. Perhaps a longer season was wanted for

the growth and expansion of English genius. The misfortunes of the empire soon summoned their masters home, and the most distinguished of our countrymen, by choice or compulsion, followed their steps. And though our learning and eloquence might not be of first-rate estimation, our address and courage far exceeded any thing which then carried the name of Roman.

England was next doomed to suffer from the inroads of the Picts, and to experience the more dreadful calamity of uninterrupted civil war. Thus a fresh plunge was made into barbarism. It was finally subdued by the Saxons, the most ferocious of nations, fresh from the morasses and fastnesses of Germany, and cast in the same mould of cruelty and ignorance with their predecessors, who had destroyed the Roman empire. One would conclude that no genius, no virtue could bear up against such accumulated misfortunes; and it therefore becomes an honourable trait in the national character to distinguish itself, and by learning too, above all the nations of Europe in these disastrous periods. The name of Gildas, the historian and memorialist of his country's sufferings

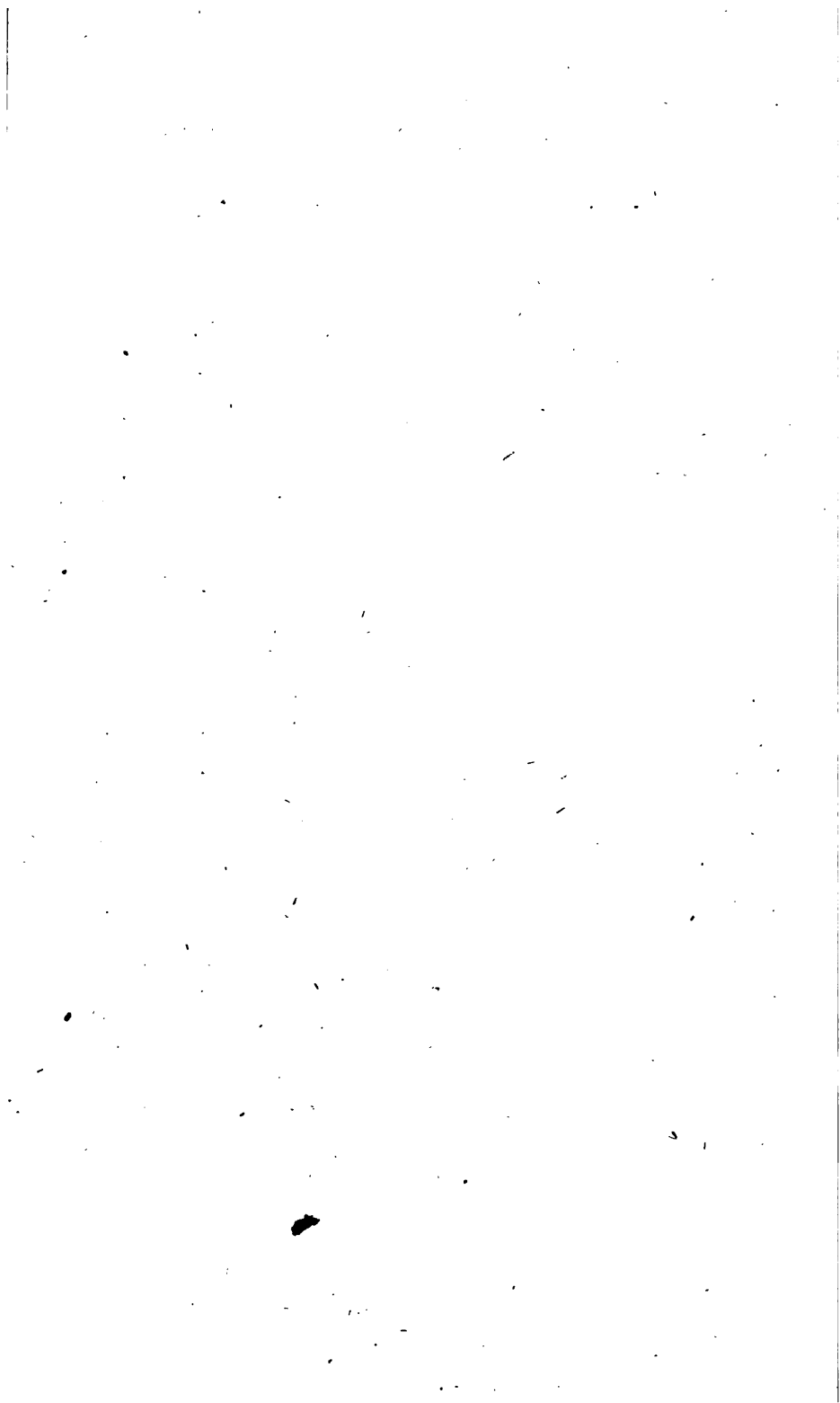
under the Saxons, is still mentioned with respect. The venerable Bede was the profoundest theologian, the best writer, and the most general scholar of his age.—Alcuin acted a part on a more conspicuous theatre; after reforming and modelling the studies of his own country, he imported them as valuable and unknown commodities into France and Germany, and even began to repay Italy the acknowledged debt of civilization and learning.—It enhances the value of these literary exertions to find them made before the nation had emerged from the tumultuous and bloody government of the heptarchy.

It will confirm an observation made in a preceding part of this chapter to remark, that what these able men had learned, they derived entirely from the cloister, the only refuge and asylum of learning. For five centuries together, reckoning from the Gothic establishments in Italy, we find no one distinguished in any degree by learning who had not received a monastic education; and we might trace in this way a succession of scholars, and an inheritance of intellectual wealth.

But

But the distresses of the times, which we before stated, soon checked the rising spirit of literature. Charlemagne and Alfred, as it has been well observed, might introduce learned men into their courts; but could not introduce learning into their respective kingdoms. In other words they could not govern events, and on them depended the fate of learning. Thus English literary glory proved but a transient splendour. From Egbert to Edward the Confessor, Alfred himself is the most conspicuous, almost the only scholar and writer; the lustre of his reign and merits was soon withdrawn, and a deep gloom of intellectual darkness took place, which hardly begins to disperse till after the Norman conquest. The tenth century in England was as disgraceful for its ignorance, and almost for its crimes, as in any other part of Europe.

We have thus followed learning to the last stage of its depression; it will be a more grateful task, to watch the period of its revival, to state the apparent causes, to trace their operations, and explain their effects.



PART II.

Of the Causes which produced the Revival
of Learning in EUROPE.

CHAP. I.

Conquests of the Arabians.—Their Genius and Temper.—Califate of Haroun.—Almamun.—Arabian Settlements in Spain.—The three Abdalrhmans.

THE principal causes of the revival of learning in Europe, may, perhaps, with propriety be reduced to a few general heads.—1. The Arabian settlements in Europe, and the consequent importation of their knowledge.—2. The Crusades considered in their general effects on the manners and sentiments, and in their more particular operations on the spirit of chivalry,

and the genius of romance and poetry.—

3. The introduction of the Roman civil law into our universities, together with the canon, and its adoption as the code, or standard of the municipal law. With these, other causes certainly co-operated ; but none seem of sufficient importance to demand a distinct discussion. Of these causes it is the design of the Second Part of this Essay, to consider the nature, and explain the efficacy.

Conquests
of the Ara-
bians.

It was by a singular revolution in the history of nations, that Europe should become indebted to the mortal enemies of her religion and arms for the first lessons of science and learning. The ferocious enthusiasm, impressed by Mahomet on his countrymen, had in a short period atchieved and secured the most important conquests. In twenty years after his death, Persia, Syria, and Egypt had been invaded and conquered. Africa, after a longer struggle, submitted to the Mahometan arms ; the proximity of Spain invited a regular descent ; and the battle of Xeres, at the beginning of the eighth century, was fatal to the divided interests and empire of the Visigoths.

Visigoths. The heroism of Charles Martel, in the bloody battle of Tours, saved the government and religion of France, and probably of Europe.

The Arabs appear from the earliest accounts of them to have possessed great natural abilities, in which acuteness of penetration seems allied with extent of comprehension. Not to repeat some well-known instances of their sagacity, it may be sufficient to quote the poetical and rational answer of an inhabitant of the desert, to the inquiry how he knew there was a God: "Exactly in the same way," says he, "that I know, " by the traces left in the sands, that a " man or an animal has passed before me. " What are the Heavens with the splendour " of their stars, the earth with its extended " countries, and the seas with their countless waves ; what are they but obligations " to believe and confess the hand of their " mighty Master?"

Genius and temper.

Another replied to the question that asked him, What means he employed to give his memory its extraordinary power of retention, " I resemble my native sands

“ which imbibe all the water that falls upon them, and does not suffer a single drop to escape.” Their powers of mind, whatever they were, for a long time wanted a proper use. Under Mahomet and his four successors, the Arabians, if not grossly ignorant, were at least ferocious, and they scarcely deserve a better character during the first regular dynasty, or house of Ommiades, which reigned near a century. It was not till their successors, the Abassides, were firmly seated in the Califate, that they seemed willing to repose from the work of destruction, to enjoy the conquests they had made, and cultivate the arts of peace.

If we except poetry, no intellectual excellence appears to have received amongst them any particular notice, and we may safely adopt their own denomination “ the time of ignorance,” of the period before their prophet. This poetry itself was little more than short hasty effusions, distinguishable from prose only by a rhyming termination; for verse had not become a regular art, nor was its prosody digested into rules before the

the time of Haroun al Raschid. Prizes, however, were instituted for its encouragement, the birth of a poet dignified a family and a tribe; and the most favoured compositions, of which specimens have been handed down to us, were written in letters of gold on Egyptian silk, and suspended on the gates of the Caaba at Mecca. We find Mahomet himself overjoyed at the conversion of Lebid, the poet, whose verses had obtained that honour; and when the influence of the poetical character in that country is considered, he might properly esteem it a material acquisition.

It was now first, about the middle of the eighth century, that, with a strong tincture of their old ferocity and oriental despotism, the Caliphs began to mingle a grosser kind of luxury; and the court of Bagdad boasted a rude splendour unknown to those of Europe. They cultivated poetry, they idolized music. The liberal arts were patronized, the mechanical ones improved, and the love of science, even in a Mahometan breast, began to supersede his zeal for the propagation of the Koran.

It

It is surely an extraordinary feature in the Arabian character, that when they had once received the proper impulsion, they should over-run the departments of science, with the same facility that they overspread the provinces of the East; and that the conquests of the pen should be as brilliant, and prove more permanent than those of the sword. It increases the singularity to observe, what seems to have been really the case, that this noble passion, or propensity, did not occupy the mind by gradual approaches; but was suddenly, and perhaps fortuitously, conceived. Their arms, from the double spur of religion and politics, were early directed against the Greek empire and metropolis. Though the gates of Paradise were liberally opened to those Mussulmen who should fall before Constantinople, the terrors of the Greek fire, or the remains of Greek courage, baffled their boldest efforts; and after many repetitions of a disgraceful defeat, they at last desisted from the hopeless undertaking. They were more successful in contracting that empire, by their conquests, and impoverishing

poverishing it by their exactions; but Greece had a noble revenge. From their captives the Arabs imbibed a love for learning; like the Romans, they were in turn subdued by the nation they had conquered, and had the sense and the virtue to be proud of their chains.

The second Caliph of the house of Abassides, Abou Giafar Almanfor, seems to take the lead in the patronage of learning and the sciences. Amidst several insurrections, many splendid conquests, much cruelty and much avarice, he found time, taste, and money for a liberal encouragement of the arts, and founded a metropolis unequalled for magnificence and population, which continued the seat of his descendants above five hundred years. Theology and astronomy, poetry and philosophy were there rivals without jealousy, and competitors without envy. His own reading lay principally in the Koran and the skies; the conscientious Iman could not be superficially acquainted with the former, and the astronomer was proved by the calculation of tables. But out of these favourite walks

no

no one was more able or better disposed to judge and reward every exertion of genius. He left his successor an immense dominion, for his valour had extended the Arabian empire over Armenia, Cilicia, and Cappadocia, a treasure of thirty millions sterling, and subjects known to be brave and willing to be wise.

Califate of
Haroun al
Raschid.

His grandson Haroun al Raschid, dreaded by the Greeks for his skill, courage and cruelty in war, was better known, and more deservedly celebrated in Europe for pacific arts, for his love of science and his encouragement of learning. In the hero of the celebrated Arabian Night Tales, we find something to approve and much to wonder at; he is a more interesting character in those imperfect records of private history, which time has yet left us. We attach ourselves to the friend and correspondent of Charlemagne, the studious inquirer, the liberal patron, the importer of useful mechanical inventions into the barbarous regions that lay beyond him. At home, we observe him eager to acquire and propagate learning by translation, we see his court thronged with
poets,

poets, and the muses domesticated under his roof. I may spare the reader the trouble of running over a list of long-forgotten names, whose verses were praised and repeated by the courtiers of Bagdad; and who themselves shared, almost without envy, the smiles of royalty. It may be presumed that the Caliph was himself a poet; his uncle Ibrahim was celebrated through Asia for the union of poetical and musical excellence; and the unfortunate Abassa, Haroun's sister, was the guiltless Sappho of the east. His memory is tarnished with cruelty to his vizir Giafar, and the antient and virtuous tribe of the Barmecides; but cruelty, savage, unrelenting cruelty, is the genuine growth of the court of Bagdad, and there is scarce a reign that is not polluted with blood: a memorable proof of the inefficiency of human learning, unaided by religion, to regulate the passions and soften the heart.

But his honours and the glory of his race were eclipsed by his second son Almamon, who succeeded his brother in the Califate, and during twenty years was the Augustus

Califate of
Almamon.

Augustus of his age and country. He was equal to that emperor in respect to patronage, was his superior in science, and stands on an equal footing with the most enlightened scholars of the period. It is probable, he profited much by the instruction and example of his father; and a short anecdote will be an apposite illustration of his early attachment to the cause of learning. Kessai, his tutor, an eminent poet and grammarian, presented himself at the door of his apartment. The young prince, engaged with his friends in the pleasures of the table, wrote a distich on a myrtle leaf, purporting, "that there was a time, for study, and a time for relaxation, that the present was a season devoted to friendship and to wine, to the roses, and the myrtles with which he was crowned." The myrtle leaf was returned with a quatrain, which told the pupil "if he had ever comprehended the true worth of learning, he would have preferred it without hesitation to any sensual pleasure; or if he truly understood the character and merits of his tutor, he would desert his companions,

"hasten

"hasten to receive him, and thank the
 "Giver of good for so invaluable a present."
 His companions were instantly deserted,
 and the master received with every mark
 of affection and respect. It might be ex-
 pected of such a man to say in his maturer
 judgment, that learned men were "lumi-
 "naries in the midst of darkness, lords of
 "human kind; of whom when the world
 "becomes destitute, it becomes barbarous."

That distinguished generosity, which, out-
 of thirty thousand pieces of gold, could
 distribute four and twenty to surrounding
 friends, before his foot was withdrawn
 from the stirrup, was soon particularly di-
 rected to the advancement of learning.
 His first care was to establish Bagdad as a
 centre of patronage, and to draw round
 him, by the attraction of munificence, the
 most eminent scholars of the period. His
 next object to collect by his ambassadors
 and agents from every quarter the most
 valuable and esteemed manuscripts, in
 Greek, Syriac, and Hebrew, more particu-
 larly the former. The best treasures of Con-
 stantinople were, in his idea, deposited in
 its

its libraries, and a correspondence of solicitation for their use is more honourable to his memory than a negotiation for a province. It was a more difficult and important task to get these works translated with spirit and propriety into Arabic, a more beneficent and friendly service to circulate these translations over the empire with diligence and rapidity. To be present in the societies of the learned, to assist at their conferences, and perhaps to determine their disputes, bears a noble testimony to his zeal, his merits, and his perseverance.

Whatever a man's pretensions may be to general learning, his affections will always tend more particularly to some single branch. Thus, though no literary department could complain of neglect, though historians and poets crowded his court, and enjoyed his favours, though astronomers were received with the most flattering distinction, and assisted with the most costly instruments; notwithstanding this, philosophy, and in particular the Aristotelian, was the mistress of his heart. The cause of this attachment it is now vain to seek; it might be communicated,

municated and was certainly advanced by the lessons and influence of Alkindus, an Arabian philosopher resident in his court, and the rival of Albumazar himself in astronomical knowledge. It would be easy to assign general reasons why the doctrines of the Lycæum obtained a preference over those of the Academy, without summoning Aristotle from the grave, to appear in a vision, and recommend the translation of his works. Our sketch of the Arabian character will shew, that the prince, while he gratified in himself a turn for speculative science, consulted the disposition of the age and the taste of his country.

Almamon incurred, and might probably deserve, the charge of a want of orthodoxy in the Mussulman's creed; he was considered as bearing a faint resemblance to their original Imams, and his introduction of scientific pursuits alarmed those pious minds, who found every thing they could grasp in the pages of the Koran. Takeddin, one of the Mahometan doctors, with the peremptoriness of Mahomet himself, determines that the Supreme Being would
 certainly

certainly punish the Caliph Almamon for interrupting the devotion of Mussulmen by the introduction of philosophical studies. The generosity of his patronage excited jealousy or envy; and in the liberal toleration of all religions to his friends the scholars, bigotry began to suspect him of wanting one himself. This conciliating temper had, at least, its temporal reward, and was attended with the most pleasing consequences; it filled his library with the choicest volumes of every country, and every religion. The Magi, the Bramins, the Jews, the Oriental Christians, and even his political enemies the Greeks, hastened to gratify his liberality with their choicest treasures of antiquity and learning.

In addition to these splendid exertions, this munificent patron of letters founded a school for philosophical instruction in his capital, under John Mesue of Damascus. He formed similar seminaries at Bocchora and Bassora, which obtained high distinction. In many cities of his extensive dominions he built and furnished libraries, and in each placed a stationary professor, who

who united with the information of a librarian the skill and knowledge of a tutor. While on all sides these learned men were rewarded with stipends adequate to their abilities or their wants, his care was extended to the rising generation, a flattering invitation collected the sons of the rich, and his paternal care consulted the comfort and instruction of the indigent but aspiring youth. Let us pause a moment on the merits of this truly great man, and consider what sovereign of Europe has done more for learning with equal means, and in periods more enlightened.

It may be added to the singularities which occur in contemplating the history of this nation, that a large portion which was cut off from the benefit of general communication, commenced its scientific pursuits nearly about the same time, and prosecuted them with equal spirit and success. When the Abassides, by a bloody revolution, had succeeded the Omniades in the caliphate, a prince of the latter house, escaping from the bloody massacre of his family, displayed the standard of revolt in

The three
Abdalrah-
mans.

A. D. 756. Spain; submission had been death, escape next to impossibility, and an independent crown was the stake he swept in this desperate game. Abdalrhaman founded in that country a kingdom which his successors held near three hundred years; Cordova had her caliph as well as Bagdad; and while Almanfor and Haroun were instructing the East, their generous rival enlightened the West.

The first
Abdalrhaman.

Of the Abdalrahmans there appear to have been three. The first, the founder of the dynasty, experienced a long reign of above thirty years, and was honoured with the title of the Just. He was a liberal patron of learned men, cultivated the sciences with success, and some specimens of his poetry are yet extant. He is said to have possessed that soft and insinuating eloquence, to which every thing is given, because nothing is demanded. That he had a taste for the great and the splendid in the arts, the mosque of Cordova will attest, which was designed and begun by this prince, but finished by his son and successor Hachem, who seems to have inherited

herited the paternal merits, and who raised over the Guadalquivir a magnificent bridge of twenty-seven arches.

The second caliph of the name, and fourth of the family, was indulged with a reign equally long, and at least equally serviceable to the cause of learning. The first part of it was displayed in the exercise of those talents which constitute the great general and the consummate politician; his maturer years were devoted to the encouragement of science and the works of peace. Philosophy and poetry occupied much of his time, and philosophers and poets shared his society, and partook of his liberality.—Architecture was encouraged with expence and taste; a new mosque was erected at Cordova; its pavement was a monument of skill and service; and the construction of its aqueduct would not have disgraced a Roman artist. The grateful citizens of Seville, on the walls he raised for their defence, inscribed the name of the founder; the walls have disappeared; but history records their gratitude and his merits.—In the register of extraordinary

The second
Abdalmu-
man.

events might be entered the patriarchal family he left behind of forty-five sons and forty-two daughters.

The third
Abdālrah-
man.

But the greatest of the Abdālrahmans was the third and last of the name, and eighth caliph; the first, who assumed the title of Emir Almoumenin, or the commander of the faithful, whence the well-known but corrupted term of Mīramolin. In his reign, those political divisions, which soon proved fatal to the dynasty, had risen to an alarming height, and afforded sufficient trial to his courage and wisdom; but he found time and opportunity to express and practise on all occasions a zealous attachment to learning. One of the longest reigns in the annals of history, a term exceeding fifty years, happening too in the tenth century, when Europe lay plunged in the grossest ignorance, while it necessarily advanced the literature of his own country, spread some gleams of light on our intellectual darkness. The schools of Bagdad, Bocchora, and Bassora, however celebrated, were too distant to tempt the curiosity of our travellers and students; and had

had not Spain, under this generous protector, opened its academies and seminaries, the benefits of Arabian learning might have been faintly felt or irreparably lost. Of the arts Abdalrhaman was a splendid cultivator; and in the magnificence of his courts, the architecture of his palaces, and the disposition of his gardens, he equalled, and perhaps surpassed his eastern competitors. The Zehra, a city and palace three miles from Cordova, was the labour of twenty-five years, at an expence of six millions sterling. His seraglio comprised an establishment of above six thousand persons, and his hunting attendants were a formidable army of twelve thousand cavaliers.

That all this power, and opulence, and grandeur, contributed little to his private happiness; he left a memorable proof by a declaration found amongst his papers, and written with his own hand, that he had tasted only fourteen days of pure and genuine pleasure. How Spain could furnish the means of these extraordinary expences, politicians may speculate and decide; the

fact is certain. She had been the Mexico of the Romans; she was more prodigal of her treasures to her eastern conquerors; her annual revenues amounted to above five millions, besides imposts in kind and the working of her mines, and probably exceeded the united income of all the western monarchies. Her population, notwithstanding the devastation of civil wars, was on the same grand scale. She boasted eighty great cities, three hundred of the second and third order, and villages innumerable. Commerce, in fact, seems to have been the fund which supplied her treasures and sustained her population. These facts appear in the statement of Arabian writers, whose works have been but lately discovered, give us a clue to the hitherto unexplained magnificence of the Caliphs, and exhibit those secret foundations on which they built their claims to gratitude from the sciences and the arts, their professors and admirers.

CHAP. II.

*Arabian Love and Reverence for Learning—
Their Studies—Some peculiarly their own—
Others derived from the Greeks—considered.*

SUCH were the noble exertions of patronage displayed by the Arabians in the East and the West: but my subject calls upon me to examine two points of more difficult consideration. I must endeavour to shew what was the real state of the learning of this singular people, and what are the nature and extent of European obligation.

Perhaps no nation ever existed which felt and expressed, early and late, a deeper reverence for the cause of learning. "No sooner," says a poet, "do I see a learned man than I long to prostrate myself before him and kiss the dust of his feet." Both the written and the traditional law came in aid to this praiseworthy sentiment.

" Equally

Love and
reverence
for learn-
ing.

"Equally valuable are the ink of the doctor and the blood of the martyr." "To him paradise is open, who leaves behind him his pens and his ink:" in other words, who commends learning by his example to his descendants. "The world is supported by four things only; the learning of the wise and the justice of the great, the prayers of the good and the valour of the brave." But what is yet stronger, they introduce the Supreme Being himself in the Koran, calling riches a trifling, but learning an invaluable good. Their prophet recommended it with singular earnestness; and Ali, when in adversity, acknowledges the justice of that providential dispensation which withheld riches and imparted science.

Their practice held a conformity with these ideas; and nothing could exceed the zeal and perseverance with which they studied and propagated learning. When the caliphate was divided and dismembered by rival claims, in this point there was no difference of sentiment or conduct, and Bagdad, Cordova, Cairo, and Cairoan were
equally

equally the feats of royalty and learning. The independent emirs, scattered over the oriental provinces, were animated with the same disposition. Even those disorderly bands, whose trade was pillage and devastation, no sooner established themselves on the coasts of an enemy, than they strove with their power to co-extend the influence of learning, opened academies, and disseminated knowledge. — The school of Salernum, whose name is yet remembered, owes its foundation to the love of science animating the breast of rovers and free-booters. A people proverbially savage, the piratical hordes of Algiers and Morocco, were softened by the address of these mighty masters of civilization into a reverence and love for learning. Those very cities, which now resound with the cries of Christian captives, then heard the less alarming voice of disputation, prided themselves in their scholars and pensioned philosophers.

Such a people, it is obvious, would pay a particular attention to their language, as the necessary or ornamental dress of their favourite learning. They boasted highly
of

of its antiquity, which is indeed incontestable, and speak of poets cotemporary with Solomon. Its copiousness, alike indisputable, was the object of their pride; and according to their elevated ideas, no mind could grasp it completely without inspiration. Copiousness, however, may be perplexing, and a tongue which could admit three hundred synonyms to express the idea of a lion or a sword, may well be suspected of abounding in superfluities; and its difficulties were increased by the rejection of compound words. It was but a little before Mahomet that the Koreishites had learned to write it; the characters now in use are the result of three distinct improvements during a period of six hundred years, and the reign of the last of their caliphs, Mostafsem, is memorable for its last and best additions. Grammarians and critics were at no period remiss in their labours; exclusive of essays on its rudiments and principles, many writers treated professedly on its variety and elegancies; and entire books were composed to illustrate its synonyms. The dialect of the Koreishites,

ites, in which the Koran was written, was the purest Arabic; and the palm of speaking and writing was contested, and may be divided between Bagdad and Bassora. The Koran is announced as a complete model of style, the admiration of men and genius whose joint powers could not rise to the spirit and dignity of its smallest chapters, and, in the prophet's own confession, a standing miracle. It was very early adopted by other nations. The Syrians excelled in its knowledge, and were celebrated for its composition, and some learned Jews wrote it with considerable success. A common religion has contributed to recommend its study through a vast extent of country, and it continues to this day the general language of the greatest part of the East.

A nation thus disposed, when their curiosity was awakened, would soon repine over the penury of their native stores, and turn their attention to other sources of supply. These translations alone could furnish; for the knowledge of foreign languages can never become in any country a general and national accomplishment. Ac-

cordingly

cordingly we find it attempted very early, and with considerable success. The most celebrated of the Greek philosophers, physicians, and mathematicians were soon clothed in an Arabian dress, and from the first, the name of Aristotle seems to have impressed the idea of superiority. The greatest of these translators was Honain Ben Ishac, a Syrian physician and a Christian, and his labours, united with those of his son, his nephew, and his pupils, formed a voluminous repository of useful science. The two earliest, but their precedence it is difficult to settle, were John Mesue and George Bachtiscua, the former the tutor of Honain, the latter the founder of a family eminent for medicine and science through a long succession of caliphs. All these undertakings were liberally rewarded and favorably received; but their fidelity comes in a questionable form. It may be presumed, that of the translators who were acquainted with the original Greek, many were indolent, careless, or incompetent; and it is well known that several translations were made, without consulting the Greek at all,

all, from a Syrian version. It is needless to say that much sense and spirit must evaporate in this double distillation. But if greater exceptions could be made or difficulties started, the general utility and service of these labours would remain unimpeached. The Arabians, though sensible of this truth, appear to have engaged themselves very little, perhaps not at all, in translation; either the study of their own language furnished sufficient employment, or their pride spurned at the servility of the task; and, though they were in the highest degree eager to learn, they were content to catch instruction from the first retailers.

It remains to inquire, with this disposition and these advantages, what was taught in their schools, what was the state of learning and science amongst them, and to shew, after able investigators, the nature and extent of the literary debt contracted by Europe. Their studies appear to have been of two sorts, such as were particularly their own, natives of the soil, and such as were transplanted from other countries, particularly Greece, with care and success.

Studies
more par-
ticularly
their own.

The

The former may be briefly characterised, as they were never adopted by any of their European pupils, and withered away on the spot of their original cultivation. They were religious, metaphysical, and legal. Of these studies, the foundation was the Koran; the superstructure they raised admitted ornament and variety. Their religious pursuits often wandered over the immense field of tradition, the deeds and sayings of their prophet, and the lives of their earliest saints. Their metaphysics, too, had an ample scope. In a country where four doctors were equally eminent in fame and orthodoxy, and possessed of an authority that yielded only to the Koran, a wide space was necessarily open for the wanderings of fancy and speculation; and every possible opinion might be sheltered under the shield of one or the other of these puissant leaders. Aristotle, who was early translated, increased the number of thinkers or writers, and furnished all parties with arms to continue the intellectual warfare. The number of sects among them, growing out of opinions merely abstract
and

and speculative, far surpassed those of the European schools. Their Legal decisions were grounded, as far as they could, on the literal text of the sacred page, and when that failed them, on authorised interpretation. Necessity, convenience, an improving state of society, produced additional laws, and the state wisely lent its arm to enforce their observance. Amongst their original pursuits may yet be mentioned History and Poetry. The former however seems not to have formed an important object in their consideration or pursuit. They regarded the age which had rolled away before the birth of Mahomet, and which boasts the noble exertions of Greek and Roman genius, as the night of ignorance, or as the season of useless knowledge. Of their own antiquities they were incurious observers, and were probably unconscious of their use and value. Poetry, as we observed before, flourished very early amongst them, and it continued late; but it was of a sort and nature totally foreign to our ideas and habits, and appropriate only to themselves.

A review of their polite literature will bring within a cloſer ſurvey their hiſtorical and poetical merits.

Studies derived from the Greeks.

Their other ſtudies were derived from Greece, but received from their new maſters enlargement and improvement. They may be arranged under the general heads of philoſophy, mathematics, and phyſics. 1. In philoſophy with this aid their progreſs was far from inconfiderable, but their ardour was ill-directed; and inſtead of the dreary waſte they choſe to expatiate in, they might have viſited regions teeming with flowers and fruits. Morals were poſtponed to logic, and ſacrificed to metaphyſics. Ariſtotle ſoon became the excluſive favourite, of which the cauſe may probably be traced to the preference of Almamon, the propagating ſpirit of his ſchool, and above all, to the ſimilar and congenial tempers of the philoſopher and his pupils. Of the merits of Plato they appear not to have been inſenſible; they termed his doctrine the moſt eminent, the moſt noble, the divine; but they praiſed Ariſtotle leſs and followed him

him more. It was indeed barely possible they should relish Plato; whose beauties must have been impervious to all eyes that were not familiarized to the poetry, the history, and the mythology of Greece. The naked sense of the peripatetic met their ideas more directly; his dialectics were admirable aids to argumentation; his metaphysics were calculated to exercise a keen and vigorous intellect; and even in his physics as a history, or as a system of nature, they found nothing repugnant to their prejudices and superstition. When in progress of time heresies and schisms increased and alarmed the faithful, his influence was still further extended, and his assistance, alike in attack or defence, acknowledged and applied by all parties. His ascendancy was paramount and universal. Our first acquaintance with him cannot be refused to the communication of the Arabians. He might, and indeed did, repose on the dusty shelves of our monastic libraries, but his language was a charm and an amulet to preserve him from the contact of barbarians. He was first known generally to the

West by a translation from the Arabic, and this, with all its defects, was destined to hold through Europe the language of infallibility.

It was at the last gasp of the Latin tongue that Boëthius made his translation, of which the name was known and some extracts preserved; but its circulation was partial from the first, and soon entirely stopt by the difficulties of the times. The schoolmen are charged not only with borrowing the text, but with appropriating to themselves the labours of the Arabian commentators; and it must be admitted, if they did not borrow their exact words, they caught their spirit, and seized all the subtilty of their logic, and all the acuteness of their metaphysics. Happily their piety or their wisdom secured them from the adoption of those impious opinions too conspicuous in the Arabian school, and to be traced back perhaps to the Grecian source, by which the power of God was arraigned in the creation, and his providence disputed in the government of the world.

2. In carrying our view over the principal branches of mathematical learning, we

shall find occasion to admire their genius in invention, or their address in improvement. To Algebra they gave a name, though the discovery may be referred to the Greek Diophantus, whose works amongst them were early translated and generally circulated. By him it was confined to a single class of questions; they extended its application and generalized its use; and in estimating their merits it might perhaps be determined, that their advances on the original are at least as conspicuous as the improvements which have been suggested; and the progress which has been made by later and even by modern proficients. This is no common praise. In Geometry their pretensions are by no means so striking. Euclid was translated, and in their hands, and probably well-understood, but they left behind them no works of importance; and this science is said to have been revived in the fifteenth century, nearly in the state in which it was left by that great geometri-
cian. A different account must be given of their astronomical proficiency. To the practical lessons of their neighbours the

Algebra.

Geometry.

Astronomy.

Chaldeans they made considerable additions, and suggested some valuable improvements to the ampler knowledge derived from the almagest of Ptolemy, and the Greek astronomers. The caliphs Almanfor and Almamon calculated astronomical tables, the instruments in use were considerably improved, and new ones of singular utility invented; on the authority of one of our ablest professors * we may safely admit, and might easily particularise the extent and variety of their discoveries; but important as they avowedly were, it must be observed that they failed to correct antient errors, and smooth the way for the reception of the true system. Astrology seems to have been prosecuted with the same zeal at least as astronomy; its professors were seen in the courts and consulted in the cabinets of princes, and no public or even private enterprize of moment was undertaken without consulting the stars. If this blemish obscures the brightness of their scientific character, we must not forget how long Europe, when it would have

* Flamsteed.

spurned

spurned the idea of a comparison with the Arabian pretensions, was a slave to similar prejudices, and that the present age is the first that can claim an *entire* exemption from the same reproach. Geography was another of those studies borrowed from the Greeks, and very sensibly improved, but in a more eminent degree by the latter Arabians. Oriental scholars have regretted that we have not been disposed to give them sufficient credit for their proficiency in this branch of science, and have perhaps rightly attributed our topographical ignorance of the East to this ill-founded disrespect. They enumerate many writers of distinction, and place Abulfeda, better known for his historical merits, at their head. With Optics antiquity was but little conversant, and the schools of Bagdad and Cordova did not much extend the bounds of that useful science: with the nature and uses of refraction they appear to have been unacquainted; and the moderns have the just praise of discovering the properties and ascertaining the laws of dioptrics. Not that the Arabians neglected this pursuit, and in the

Geography.

Optics.

eleventh century, they boast the names of eminent writers on the subject of perspective, but they seem to have cultivated it with the same view as judicial astrology, to play upon the hopes and fears, the follies and the prejudices of mankind. To this origin we may refer the glassy globes of our enchanter Merlin, the burning glasses, those objects of vulgar terror, and the optic tube of friar Bacon, through which he saw the display of future events. It is creditable to the Arabians that so great a map, as Bacon should have formed himself in their school, and his *Opus Majus*, if their assistance was withdrawn, would lose much of its magnitude and merit. Since his time the invention of telescopes and microscopes has placed at once the vast and the minute within our grasp; and in the enjoyment of this discovery we are inclined to pity the ignorance of the Greeks, the Romans, and the Arabians, without considering the question that posterity will ask, What has been our application and use of these advantages? If an acquaintance with the mathematical sciences may be proved, and it must be presumed, from the success of those

those mechanical inventions. by which time is gained, labour diminished, and work completed, many useful ones might be referred to the East, and directly claimed by the advocates for Arabian knowledge. But whatever their other pretensions were, their eminent skill in arithmetic rests on the most indisputable grounds. They are *said* to have derived from the Indians their acquaintance and use of cyphers; but it is *certain* we are indebted directly to them for that useful communication, which alone would have placed them in the list of our most provident benefactors. They taught us the method of counting by ten cyphers, and ascending beyond ten in a decuple proportion; they put us in possession of the science of numbers, and enabled us to extend our inquiries, enlarge our knowledge, and increase our comforts.

Arithmetic.

3. If under Physics we range natural history, and a course of consecutive experiments, much cannot be said in favour of the Oriental pretensions. They have left behind them but indifferent documents of merit; no sketches of the history of animals,

Physics.

mals, no careful inquiries, no ingenious suggestions. We can find no names amongst them that deserve to be put at the bottom of that list in which we place their master Aristotle, and Pliny, Ray, and Buffon.— But if by physics we admit the ordinary signification of medicine, we shall find more room for detail and greater occasion of applause. Mesue in the East, and Geber in the West, as early as the ninth century, acquired great celebrity: the latter is considered as the venerable father of chymistry, and in the eighteenth century has been honoured with the praise of Boerhaave. Avicenna and Rhafishave been classed with Hippocrates and Galen. Greater credit and higher advantages were attached to the profession than either in Greece or Rome, and the chances augmented for a display of merit. No less than eight hundred physicians are said to have exercised their art in Bagdad; whence we may form an idea of the numbers that would occupy subordinate stations, and disperse themselves for gain over that extended empire. Of their skill, it is easier to hazard an opinion than

than to speak with precision. They were long celebrated, and continued the dictators of this science over Europe. Brissot, a French physician, who died prematurely the beginning of the sixteenth century, was the first who charged them with a gross deviation from the Grecian school, and an outrageous violation of common sense and experience, and made a direct appeal to their common masters. Their credit declined sensibly after this attack, till Boerhaave followed up the blow, and sacrificed them at the shrine of Hippocrates. To gain an idea of what they knew and taught, we may hastily sketch their attainments in anatomy, botany, and chymistry; but we must not forget, that in the two former, they may be considered principally as improvers of the Greek stock, and in the latter only as adventurers on their original property.

In Anatomy the Arabians never obtained, Anatomy
 and from some circumstances peculiar to themselves they were not likely to obtain, a remarkable proficiency. Among the Eastern nations, some inhuman attempts on living
 living

living bodies had produced a superstitious fear of using those of the dead, and a criminal excess ended in a culpable neglect. But the Arabians in particular, both from the theory and the practice of their religion, seem to have been prohibited from the business of dissection, and the polluting touch of the dead alarmed the superstition of the most determined naturalist. If we admit an old division of anatomy, with respect to the subject of its operations, into the parts *containing* and the parts *contained*, the exterior and the interior of the human body, it is obvious that the latter must have been in a great measure out of their reach, and conjecture have supplied the place of real knowledge. Even at present it is assuming the language of boldness to say they are accurately ascertained, though a long course of experiments, the aid of chymistry, the use of the microscope, and the invention of injections, have facilitated and improved anatomical studies.—In the plainer knowledge of the *containing* parts, they must be considered principally as copyists from the Greeks. Probably they slackened in their efforts

efforts from considering that all that could be known was accessible to immediate observation, presented itself under a uniform appearance, and could not be improved by experience or advanced by speculation. It may be reckoned among their misfortunes, that they never applied their undoubted mathematical knowledge to the investigation and illustration of physical properties, by which their difficulties would have been lightened, and those phenomena, which escaped even Arabian sagacity, satisfactorily disclosed.—But the idea of this useful appropriation was reserved for the penetration of Descartes, and for an age better calculated to catch the spirit of scientific improvement.

Botany seems not to have attained among them the full consideration to which it is entitled, either as a useful science, or an elegant amusement, but was far from being neglected, and was advanced considerably beyond the state in which they found it under Dioscorides. A tolerably long catalogue of botanists might be readily furnished, but as we now naturally inquire

Botany.

rather

rather what they did, than who they were; it may be sufficient to remark, that they exhibited an alphabetical disposition of names, an accurate account of their respective forms and sorts, and a useful statement of their medicinal virtues. This is a mode to which, having been long familiar, we ascribe little praise; but our ingratitude will detract nothing from the merits of its inventors.

Chymistry. It is probable their astonishing advances in chymistry, of which they claim the invention, might relax their diligence in this and other pursuits which had medicine for their object. As our ideas are now established of this science, the Greeks appear to have been in no respect conversant in it. In the East the refiner's trade had been grossly known, and the Egyptians had made some awkward attempts, which rather discountenanced than promoted the student's progress. So little was understood and practised, on the whole, that it would be but quibbling to deny originality to the Arabians. Under their hands a rapid and correct analysis, a skilful and ready decomposition,

position, performed by instruments of the happiest invention, mark them as the masters of this useful science. They addicted themselves to it with unwearied application, new discoveries were daily made by their experiments, and they left behind them a great accumulation of important knowledge. Its first divulgers and propagators in the West, less grateful than vain, carrying with them the appearance of originality, obtained a name and honors due only to their instructors. I need not detail the uses of chymistry, which no one will deny, nor insist, which perhaps the subject would authorise, on the useful change it produced on the pharmaceutical part of physic. Our obligation is sufficiently attested by the terms of art and the names of instruments, by the Arabic denominations, and those characters, vested to vulgar eyes with occult powers, of drugs, essences, extracts, and medicines, which catch the eye in every apothecary's shop.

But as praise is seldom unmixed, and as their astronomy had degenerated into judicial

cial astrology, so their chymical knowledge was often misapplied and perverted. The endless search of the philosopher's stone, and that ever-expected and never-arriving moment of the grand projection, occupied and disgraced the chymist's labours. Nor had the transmutation of metals alone its aspirants, the elixir of life, the dream of an immortal existence below, the repulsion of ill and the attainment of good, by talismans and charms ; these and a thousand magical fooleries may be fairly charged on the abuse of chymistry. Good sense is, however, the native of every clime, and we find a remarkable protest, at an early period of their history, exhibited on his death-bed by Abou Joseph, one of their most eminent lawyers, who had been chief Cadi of Bagdad, and was the tutor and friend of the unfortunate Giafar, Vizir to Aaron al Raschid.—“ Learn,” says he to his sons, who surrounded the bed of their dying father, “ all the sciences, if your disposition carries you to them, with the exception of three ; judicial astrology, chymistry, and theological

" gical controversy. The first multiplies the
 " cares and uneasinesses of life ; the second
 " swallows up our property ; and the third
 " engenders doubts and finally destroys re-
 " ligion." Had this advice been followed
 by his countrymen, the Arabian had been
 classed with the Greek and Roman name.

CHAP. III.

Their polite Literature.—Poetry.—History.—Eloquence.—Means of the Communication of the Arabian Learning.—The probable literary Debt of Europe.—Periods of the Elevation and Decline of Arabian Learning.

Polite literature.

UNDER the polite literature of the Arabians we may comprise their poetry, history, and eloquence; of these the first was fondly cherished and studiously cultivated; the second was ill understood and carelessly composed; the last, from the foundation of the Caliphate, seems hardly to have existed amongst them. They will require a short and separate notice.

Poetry.

Their Poetry was but slightly attended to by their western coteremporaries, and, notwithstanding the enthusiasm of Oriental scholars and translators, has made few advances in the public opinion. In fact it is of so different a complexion from the standard compositions of the Greek and Roman

man schools, that nothing but a total change of our ideas, and an education for the express purpose, could ever render it palatable or even tolerable to European readers. Truth, I know, is alone unchangeable, and national taste fluctuates in endless variety; but here superiority might be claimed without arrogance and established without difficulty. We are acquainted with no one principle of composition which would not condemn and disprove *their* pretensions.

When the volumes of Grecian learning were communicated to the Arabians, from its poetry they were repelled at once by their religion, their habits, and their taste. Those beautiful mythological fables, so familiar and interesting to all classical readers, were abomination and pollution in the eyes of a faithful mussulman; and his habits and taste, being formed on a love for the extraordinary and wonderful, had no relish for simplicity, grace, or elegance. The glaring and meretricious ornaments of Oriental poetry were more grateful than the dignified dress of the Homeric muse. As nature and truth do not excite wonder,

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they

they had recourse to art and fiction ; hence the fabulous, the allegorical, the prodigious, were derived. As the style ever labours to bring itself to a level with the subject it treats and the sentiments it enforces, it of course became inflated, figurative, hyperbolic. I am aware it demands an intimate knowledge of a language to decide on the merits of its poets, and I am not certain that those from whom I draw my intelligence fully possessed that requisite ; but if we divest the specimens we have left of their rhythmical dress, and compare them with passages of the same length literally translated from Homer or Virgil, they shrink from the test.—In the cruel operation we lose the poet, and every poetical limb, and find no one requisite left of what in our ideas constitutes the beauty or excellence of composition.

Without the display of names of poets and poems, it would appear that their best exertions are characterised by wildness, rather than warmth of imagination, their object and design clouded by an accumulation of hyperbolic figures, and their uniform affect-

ation

ation of the sublime destroying its effect when really obtained. It may be observed in their favour, that they seem not to have made of poetry so serious a business as the Greeks, or to have supposed it could have demanded the undivided application of a whole life. As their ancestors were delighted with extemporaneous composition, so their successors were satisfied with short but brilliant exertions, and admitted into their works no system of regularity, no continuity of plan. Had they valued and studied Homer, they would naturally have shrunk from the long-extended labours of the Epic muse; and the nice evolution of design in the Greek tragedians, if not too laborious, had been too cold and delicate an operation for them. Of the dramatic art they appear to have entertained no idea, since no vestiges are to be traced in their works.—But if they failed in the serious, their pretensions to the lighter poetry may be better founded? It may claim indulgence; it can hardly aspire to praise. Whatever the subject they celebrate, whatever the person to whom they

address themselves, puerile witticisms, petty conceits, far-fetched allusions, and studied points, float upon the surface to dazzle and surprise. Such trash is substituted for the graces of narration and the powers of description, for sentiments that speak to the understanding, and appeals that address the heart. Every Arabian poet was first a metaphysician, and every lover outdoes Cowley himself in analytic skill and scholastic subtlety. Humour is in some respects national and local; but we can form no conception of it, which will commend *their* practice. A gay sprightliness and airy vivacity they often affect and sometimes attain; but they are generally quaint, languid, and almost dull.

The naturalization of such poetry would not much have enriched our literary fund; but if, as a learned French writer* suggests, we are indebted to them for the introduction of rhymes, the obligation is of too pleasing a nature not to be gratefully acknowledged. The Gothic Runes are generally admitted to afford a nearer and a simpler origin. The researches of Warton,

* Hue.

and I need not add they are learned and ingenious, tend very much to increase the debt of our literature. That peculiar species of fiction denominated the Romantic, which was totally unknown to Greece or Rome, he conceived to have been introduced by them into Europe so early as the eighth, or the ninth century. Spain, of course, was the first spot of their importation; and the Spaniards, struck with the splendour of their imagination, adopted and propagated their interesting fables. By Marseilles and Toulon they found an inlet into France; Brittany was the province in which they were most successfully cultivated; and Wales and Cornwall were closely united with Brittany, by the same customs, frequent alliances, and a common language. Hence the tremendous exploits of Gog and Magog, the creation of dragons, the mystical stories of Stonehenge and the enchantments of Merlin. A different opinion, which gives romance a Gothic origin and a northern descent, has been ably supported; but the balance still inclines in favour of the Arabians.

History.

With the ideas they entertained of History, which we have cursorily mentioned, it was certain they would pay no attention to the Greek historians, and left to themselves, it was not likely they should cultivate it with success.—The study, however, was far from being neglected, and the number of their historians, if to such as have been published and translated we add those who repose undisturbed in manuscript, is sufficiently formidable. Alwakadi was perhaps one of their earliest writers, since he was cotemporary with Almamon, and patronised by him. He was translated, and probably much improved by Ockley; but the zeal and eloquence of that unfortunate scholar have not been able to give much interest to the Arabian author, and that rises principally from the importance of the facts related. Ockley's judgment on their historical merits may be safely trusted, since he was an able linguist and a judicious critic, and he determines that they were absurd in the choice and arrangement of their materials, inartificial and careless in their narration, and conceited and hyperbolic.

bole in their expressions. Cardonne possessed a more intimate acquaintance with their language, having, according to his own account, almost lost his own in his familiarity with the Oriental idioms, and his pursuits led him to the perusal and translation of their historians. His decision arraigns their want of perspicuity and order, their dissingenuous silence or suppression of essential facts, and their disgusting brevity and dryness. Our award, if made upon the Latin translations hitherto exhibited, cannot be very favourable. When we take Abulpharagius in hand, we must smile to see his brother writers loading him with praises, under which Livy and Gibbon must have fainted;—glory of the wise, phoenix of the age, the Heaven-inspired doctor. His history is not without its merit; he is sometimes copious, interesting, and instructive; yet the supplement, by his translator Pocock, is of a very superior order. Elmacin, who wrote something later, translated by Erpenius, and published by Golius; took a flight back as far as the creation; but dropt suddenly into a dry
 chrono-

chronology of the Mahometan princes.—
 The comment on Abulfeda, who follows
 about a century after, is infinitely more
 valuable than the text, and raises a much
 higher idea of the merit of Reiske and
 Schultens, than of the Syrian prince.—
 With respect to their historians, who yet
 remain in manuscript, some scholars who
 have perused them have given a most flat-
 tering account, and raised the public ex-
 pectation; perhaps they may excel those
 which are already in our hands; but we
 cannot expect to be improved by their style
 or instructed by their method; though their
 facts might be eminently useful to eluci-
 date their own and the European history.
 If their biographers are, as it is said, nu-
 merous and intelligent, literature, even
 yet, might be assisted by their publication;
 and if Bohadin's life of Saladin is not too
 favourable a sample, we should be gainers,
 not only in novelty of fact, but in skilful-
 ness of arrangement and felicity of com-
 position. It ought not to be omitted, that
 in the intermixture of political and literary
 history, or rather in their addition of
 memoirs

memoirs of the learned to their lives of the great, they proved their profound reverence of learning, and pursued a path unknown to the Greek and Roman historians.

Of their Eloquence little can be said. It Eloquence. might be, and probably was, known and practised in Arabia, so long as freedom flourished, as it was one of the three national characteristics by which they were proud to be distinguished; but even then, beyond doubt, it must have been strongly tinged with the barbarism of the times. When a succession of Caliphs had introduced a complete despotism over the East, it became a useless acquisition, and perhaps a dangerous accomplishment. Its exercise before the Cadi, the Vizir, or the Caliph, would be difficult, perhaps impracticable; and the powers of Cicero himself had been torpid, when an offended tyrant, by a stamp or a nod, summoned the executioner to be a party in the trial. The uplifted scymetar suspended ratiocination, and banished declamation. The Divan might be a place in which rival statesmen would enforce or illustrate their opinions by the aid of
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of oratory; but this is supposition, and the art appears to have been entirely lost. Their dependance in those desperate cases, which elicit from us the most impassioned addresses of eloquence, turned entirely on a sudden effort of wit, couched in a rhyming impromptu. The desired effect was often produced by these unexpected sallies; the culprit was sometimes dismissed, and not rarely rewarded. Ockley, or rather Alwakadi, informs us that an Arabian robber, who was condemned to have his hands cut off, was pardoned by Moawyah, the first Caliph of the Omniades, for the sake of four ingenious verses he made and repeated to him in the field. This remission was the more extraordinary, as it was the first relaxation he had shewn from the severity of justice. I might add many pleasing illustrations of this truth from d'Herbelot's entertaining, but imperfect work.

Such probably was the state of science and literature amongst the Arabians; and if this sketch at all approaches the truth, there can be no doubt of the utility of its

its communication. In fact, whether we adopt the sentiments of its panegyrists or its decriers, this result will necessarily appear, that it flourished at a period when Europe was involved in comparative darkness, and when its application must have had a beneficial tendency ; that it was of a sort and size fitted to its perceptions, to answer its exigences and supply its demands ; and that nothing could better fill the chasm between the ignorance of the tenth and the illumination of the fifteenth century. Modern scholars, rich in accumulated knowledge, may despise the Arabian pretensions ; but had they been such as our own, the brilliancy would have been oppressive, and the weak eyes of our ancestors must have suffered in a stream of light. As the case actually stood, the lessons that were offered were not too profound to excite despair, nor too easy to produce confidence and neglect, but were such as awakened curiosity, stimulated diligence, and facilitated improvement.

The modes of its communication cannot now be very accurately explained : amongst themselves

Modes of
communi-
cation.

themselves nothing appears to have been omitted by which its propagation might be universally extended. From Casiri's account of the manuscripts in the Escorial library, and from other documents, we might exhibit a variety of proofs of their indefatigable labours for this purpose, scarcely inferior to our own at this period of literary advancement. The plain and solid diet of learning was no longer able of itself to gratify their intellectual appetite, and many delicate and high-seasoned articles enlarged and protracted the repast of the Arabian student. Collections of poems with eulogies of their writers, works of minor poets, volumes of criticism, innumerable samples of poetical biography, miscellaneous productions, assemblies of the learned, discussions, debates, and communications, these were frequent, and attest the advanced progress of cultivation and taste. The higher means and requisites were fully in their power: their libraries were large and splendid beyond any reasonable calculation which shall fairly estimate their means, and compute the probable difference, in point

of number, between a collection of manuscript and printed volumes; particularly at a period when the art and the materials of the transcriber were by no means common. Those of Bagdad probably claimed the pre-eminence; but the royal one of the Fatimites contained a hundred thousand manuscripts, elegantly transcribed, highly ornamented, and liberally communicated to the students of Cairo. The Omniades in Spain boasted one of six hundred thousand. Above three hundred writers are said to have found employment in the neighbourhood of Cordova, and no less than seventy libraries were opened for the accommodation of the learned, in a little kingdom which scarce extended beyond the limits of the modern Andalusia. Private collections bore a proportion to the grandeur of these public treasures; and a private doctor refused an invitation from the sultan of Boecchora, because the carriage of his books alone would have required the use of forty camels. The days of Omar had passed away, and such Arabians as these would have been as eager as a Greek, a Roman,

or

or a Briton, to have snatched the precious volumes of the Alexandrian library from destruction and the flames.

Means of
the com-
munication
of their
learning.

Their communication of learning to other countries, though sensibly felt, was necessarily circumscribed. The Arabians, as we had occasion to state before, were in the highest degree partial to their own language; and though greedy of science, cultivated no other, and rested implicitly on the faith of translators. As they were earnest to diffuse what they had acquired, they gladly received strangers into their seminaries; but these could not be numerous; and the ardour for improvement would be slackened by the dangers of travelling, and the difficulties of acquiring a new and perplexing language. Latin was the common medium of learned intercourse in the West, as Arabic was in the East; and those alike who were disposed to teach, or eager to learn, were interested in procuring Latin translations of the necessary works. To facilitate this important point, a set of men offered themselves, with useful knowledge and serviceable habits. These were

were Jews, commonly physicians, whose profession secured in every country a general welcome, whose acquaintance with languages enabled them to excel as translators, and whose itinerant habits rolled before them their stock of useful science. They brought into Europe not only the works of the Arabians settled in Spain, but of all such as had acquired celebrity in the East, where they were intimately connected, and of such as were read and studied in Egypt or in Africa. Had they translated them directly into Latin, the use and service had been obvious; but they were often compelled to give them a Hebrew dress, and trust to time and accident for a final accommodation. Not that this business was exclusively in their hands, and inquiry might produce the names of European translators, which deserve not to be forgotten. In Muratori's collection, mention is made of Gerard of Cremona, a Lombard, who was eminently distinguished for his translations from the Arabic. But, whoever they were, they did not want respect or patronage, and as far back as the time of Charlemagne, we find a general idea

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prevalent

prevalent of the excellence of Oriental learning, and a liberal spirit of encouragement exercised towards those who professed the art to disclose its treasures.

In process of time this dissemination of learning, partial as it avowedly was, produced its effects and fruit. The love of it at last revived in European breasts, and students hastened in crowds to the schools of Spain for instruction. It would be amusing, and perhaps instructive, to give an account of the different men of learning who presided in their seminaries, to analyse their lectures, and exhibit a list of those European scholars whom the zeal of science sent over the Pyrenees. But such pleasing anecdotes are denied the learned, and the diligent inquiries of Brucker himself have produced nothing interesting on this subject. There is, however, no doubt but in the tenth and eleventh centuries their schools were thronged with students from different parts of Europe, and amongst these we find Gerbert, afterwards pope under the name of Sylvester the Second. If such scholars were formed under their eye, we might wish
 their

their lecture-rooms had been still more crowded, for Gerbert was undoubtedly the most learned man of his time, and of his tutors we are obliged to think with sentiments of respect. His attainments, seen through the mist of ignorance or prejudice, were magnified into supernatural powers; and the geometrician and chymist swelled into the magician, who, at will, controlled Nature and her works. It would be grateful to record the names of Englishmen who sought knowledge in a distant soil, but, to a hasty search, three only occur. Wallis mentions Adelard, a monk of Bath, who, after acquiring mathematical knowledge in Spain, Egypt, and Arabia, translated Euclid from the Arabic; and Robert of Reading, a brother monk, and cotemporary scholar. Daniel Morlay is noticed by Wood; and Duck, the civilian, represents him as an indefatigable scholar, who, in quest of knowledge, had studied at Oxford, and visited Paris and Toledo.

With this readiness to teach on one side, and this disposition to learn on the other, it may properly be asked, What were the obligations incurred, and what the studies adopted?

Statement
of European
obligations.

adopted? It may cursorily be replied, that though people cannot always choose their instructors, they will invariably select what they are to learn, and that, at least, without the concurrence of the mind's proficiency were vainly expected. Of the treasures thus exhibited, much was adopted, but more neglected. The Europeans treated the Arabians exactly as the Arabians had treated the Greeks. Indifferent to their language, religion, history, and poetry, all that gratified their prejudices, their pleasure, and their pride, they attached themselves only to those studies from which they expected use or amusement, or both. Hence mathematics, in its most material branches, physics, or rather the medicinal art in its leading departments, and the Aristotelian philosophy in its full extent, engrossed their attention. The selection was not ill appropriated to their wants, and does credit to their understanding; and if they followed and surpassed the absurdities of their masters, a thousand circumstances might be pleaded to explain and excuse this unfortunate bias of the mind. Judicial astrology, the transmutation

mutation of metals, the elixir of life, and the never-ending round of philosophical disputation, were flattering seducers, at a moment when curiosity was first awakened, and desire alive. The studies they adopted would have furnished ample employment for the most active and determined pursuit; but with what equality soever they might set out, the Aristotelian philosophy soon, in extent and progress, surpassed all competition, and occupied, for more than three centuries, the genius and the talents of Europe. This has been often pathetically lamented as a dreadful misfortune, and we have been taught to lament that classical studies were not the first occupation of our rude ancestors. But it is obvious that no relish could, at such a period, have been imparted to these invaluable volumes, and that they demand a course of preparation which these very studies, so apparently opposed to them, most efficaciously advanced. Aristotle gave their faculties intense employment, though, in a bad cause, and a wrong direction; physics, though less ardently pursued, extended their sphere of observation, and their range of experience; and mathe-

matics induced habits of accuracy and precision. The soil was preparing not only for the reception of classical literature, but for the abundant harvest of general learning which crowned the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Periods of
the elevation
and decline of Ara-
bian learning.

Perhaps it may be considered as a proper addition to what has been said on the Arabian learning, to subjoin a short statement of those periods in their history most distinguished by its elevation and decline. It was very early they became a divided people, and lost what the Romans retained till the division of their empire—a unity of power, and a centre of union. It was only under Almanzor, their second Caliph of the house of Abassides, that the government was under one head, and his subjects had a range as extensive as their wishes, and more universal than their genius. It is therefore in the seats of their divided power that we must look for the state of learning and the exertions of scholars.

In the East, under the Abassides, learning may be considered as having reached its highest excellence, about, or a little after,
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the reign of Almamon, and retaining it, with a few exceptions, till the time of Radhi, their twentieth Caliph, a space of about three hundred years. Then learning sympathized with power on its declination; but still it was so much a national passion and a general pursuit, that in those subsequent insurrections, which shook and debased the Caliphate, it made from time to time some striking claims to public notice. The reign of its last Caliph, Mostafsem, as I have before observed, was memorable for a change in its characters, universally adopted; and some faint gleams of former literary brightness may be traced after the Tartarian, perhaps after the Turkish conquests. The advantageous effects of communication with Europe may be considered as having entirely ceased with the former period.

The Fatimite Caliphs established themselves in Egypt before the close of the tenth century, and continued to flourish till conquered and displaced by Nouredin and Saladin, a little before the opening of the third crusade. Though the same fol-

lies and crimes were acted in this contracted theatre, and Cairo was too faithful a miniature of Bagdad, the resemblance was happily supported by a liberal attention to the cause of learning, by institutions opened for the instruction of youth, and rewards dispensed to their instructors. The merits of the Arabians in Spain have been more fully enumerated, and if we turn our attention to the opposite coast, we shall find, from their earliest settlement in Africa, they never slackened in their efforts for the promotion of knowledge. Whether we consider the Aglabites or the Zerites, the Almoravides or the Almohades, the dynasties which successively occupied that country for five hundred years, this is still the paramount object. Whatever scenes of turbulence and cruelty their reigns exhibit, letters always experienced a calm, and genius found a friend. The most flourishing period of learning in these countries may be fixed about the eleventh century; and if we suppose some superiority in the pretensions of the Eastern division of the Arabian power, it

it was compensated, as far as Europe was concerned by this proximity of situation and promptitude of communication. The time of the decline of their learning it is not necessary to attempt exactly to ascertain; because it may be generally remarked, and will hardly be disputed, that it happened about that period, when European genius had felt its powers, looked to higher instructors, and panted for a nobler scene of literary exertion.

C H A P. IV.

The Crusades.—Statement of general and particular Advantages to Civilization and Learning.

I AM now to consider the Crusades as a cause of the revival of learning, and shall hope for indulgence, if the proofs I submit should not appear so full, direct, and demonstrative as might be wished by the lovers of truth. Reasonable deductions from admitted facts, and conjectures founded on admissible evidence, must necessarily form the outline and constitute the merit of such an attempt. Many writers who have paid considerable attention to the Crusades have ascribed little to their scientific and literary efficacy, and those who have been disposed to think more highly of them in that respect have afforded few materials to support their opinion. I am inclined to go further than most of them on that ground, and in stating the motives of my own conviction,

viction, shall hope to influence others to a similarity of sentiment. After a few observations on the origin of the Crusades, I shall proceed to ascertain these effects by following the crusaders through the regular stages of their progress to the Holy Land, their actions and residence in the East, and their return to their native countries. I shall then trace the operations of these events on the manners and literature of the West, as they may be distinguished in the improvements of chivalry, romance, and the Provençal poetry.

Pilgrimages to Jerusalem were recommended and practised in the Christian church, almost from the time of its establishment under Constantine, either as the performance of an oath, or the completion of a penance. They were not discontinued after the division and extinction of the Western Empire, for its barbarous conquerors had become Christians, and encouraged, as we might expect, the narrow ideas of local devotion. Even the Arabians, however different in language, manners, and religion, patronized, and sometimes

times themselves made, these pilgrimages to the holy sepulchre. Haroun al Raschid sent the key of the temple to Charlemagne, to shew it would never be closed against the Christian worshipper. Few hardships or oppressions appear to have been suffered by these pious travellers, till the settlement of the Turks of the tribe of Seljiuk in Palestine. Their gross exactions and brutal violence raised the murmurs and cries of the pilgrims, and finally roused the indignation of Europe.

The idea of uniting the force of the West, and turning it upon Asia, seems to have entered into the extensive views of the celebrated Gerbert; but it was struck out more fully and completely by the powerful mind of Gregory the Seventh. As a Christian, he might hope that a general armament would extinguish those private wars which desolated Europe, and for which no remedy could be found. As a politician, we may admit his speculations on the probable reduction of the fortunes of the great in a foreign soil, and the consequent increase of a legal prerogative; and

as an Italian, he might see the hitherto frustrated hopes of driving the Arabians entirely out of his country ripening into a certainty. Though it was his character to be sanguine, his imagination faintly grasped the future reality, when, in a letter to the Emperor Henry the Fourth, he talks of heading an army of fifty thousand men in the prosecution of this great design. The justice of it entered very little into his consideration, or of his successor Urban the Second; and it would be doing too much credit to the penetration of either to suppose they superstructed, on the success of these Asiatic expeditions, a civil despotism and a religious infallibility. No respect to science, or letters, no hope of advancing the arts, improving the manners, and increasing the comforts of society, found in their cabinets friends or advocates. *Their* present and future advantages were alike unexpected and unwished; and it becomes interesting to consider how the ignorance and fanaticism of the age, under the agency of Providence, were preparing materials for the triumph of learning and religion.

Urban

Urban made the first appeal to the passions of a ferocious, and the prejudices of a superstitious age. How successful it proved I need not say; but must be permitted to think, that at a period when armies could rise, as it were, out of the earth at the cries of a monk, or even at the eloquence of a pope; when men could believe that the only road to salvation was the assumption of the Cross, and the only sympathy of the heart for the suffering pilgrims of Palestine,—at such a period, I must presume that no intercourse could be opened with the East, which would not prove in the highest degree advantageous to the wants and ignorance of the West. This I am now to explain; but in contemplating the benefits imparted by this communication, we must admit into our calculation the *general effect* and *final result* of all the Crusades, which occupy near a space of two hundred years. Of one, or of two, the services might have been lost, and the impression effaced; their continuance gave birth to new improvements and permanence to the old. Some particular circumstances

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seem to have occurred in each, which, as illustrative of our subject, it will be necessary to state.

The first Crusade is memorable for the prodigious numbers it enrolled in its desperate service, when age forgot its weakness, delicacy its sex, and childhood its fears. Not less than a million are supposed to have borne arms; but such were their misfortunes, their follies, or their crimes, that when their standard was unfurled on the banks of the Jordan, their diminished but fearless number scarcely exceeded twenty thousand foot and fifteen hundred horse. With this inadequate force they besieged and took the holy city; but the glorious prize was dishonoured by the most atrocious cruelty. The fruits of the first Crusade ill-repaid its loss and expence, and are comprised in the little kingdom of Jerusalem, whose duration was bounded by a term of fourscore years. However, the holy war continued to be recommended in the letters of the pope, and the sermons of the clergy, as the affair of God and of Christ, in which defeat was glory, death, martyrdom,

martyrdom, and Paradise, the reward alike of victory or repulse.

About fifty years after the first, a second Crusade was preached by St. Bernard, who proved himself a false prophet, and an ignorant politician ; but the court of Rome profited from his labours, and has canonised his memory. The Emperor Conrad and Louis the Seventh were the principal actors in the disgraceful scenes of this new undertaking, which awakened the fears, and ought to have extinguished the hopes, of the powers of Europe. However, the fatal experiment of their predecessors had suggested the safer expedient of a voyage into the East, and the sea-ports of Italy were henceforward repaired to for that purpose. And here, to follow the progress of the crusaders, we must admit that, whether they stopped at Genoa, Pisa, or Venice, they found greater knowledge and more cultivated manners than they left behind them. Italy still supported the honours of her antient name. More learned, more affluent, more luxurious than any of the European kingdoms, she stood forward as

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an instructress, and an example ; and there was hardly a want, intellectual or moral, a sentiment of taste or a sensation of curiosity, which she could not at once excite and gratify. This is an undisputed fact ; and thus these rude adventurers were presented with the most striking opportunities of improvement on the very outset of their undertaking.

Their next progress was to the metropolis of the East. The Greeks, however ill they might bear a comparison with their ancestors, appear to infinite advantage when contrasted with their western cotemporaries. The declining power of the Abassides had afforded a few spirited princes amongst them the means of reviving the long dormant spirit of military enterprise ; and their conquests were again extended to the Euphrates. At home they cultivated with success, learning, the arts, and sciences ; and France, Germany, England, or even Italy itself, had nothing to bring into competition with the commonest specimen of Grecian genius. Excellence could assume no form to present itself to the eye or the ear, the

imagination or the judgment, in which they did not possess an illustrious superiority. This was most striking in the literary department. Learning was not only the pleasing occupation of private leisure ; but the best recommendation to public notice, the surest passport to honour. The family on the throne were not merely eminent patrons of learning, but might be numbered amongst its professors ; and though the appearance of Anna Comnena at the bar of criticism may perhaps have softened its verdict, posterity has sympathised with the daughter and applauded the historian.

But to do the Crusaders justice, they were by no means insensible of the advantages thus offered. Constantinople had so many charms, and religion and justice imposed so few restraints, that they determined on the opening of the fourth Crusade to take possession of it themselves. They were more successful against their allies than their enemies ; the city was taken, and the Popes, equally able to follow or to guide events, were soon disposed to trace the

the hand of Heaven in this almost miraculous change of government; and saw, with secret pleasure, an obedient son ascend the throne of an insidious friend or an implacable enemy.

It must be admitted that sixty years possession of this noble city was a period long enough for its conquerors to have made themselves masters, not only of its wealth and power, but in some respects of its learning and taste. Improvement in some shape or other could not be avoided. Benjamin of Tudela in Navarre, a Jew physician, and one of the first European travellers, who penetrated without a sword in his hand into the East, visited Constantinople, about forty years before the fourth Crusade; and he tells us that it swarmed with ships from every country, and exhibited on every side proofs of affluence and splendour; at a period, we may add, when Paris and London were little better than straggling villages, where a modern farm-house would have formed a luxurious residence. In paying a momentary attention to the advantages derived from a

communication with the metropolis of the East, I flatter myself I am not deviating from my subject, since the whole is immediately referrible to the Crusades.

I do not, however, insist that much literary improvement was derived from this intercourse. The Franks then too much resembled the Arabians who conquered under Omar; and the libraries of Constantinople might have shared the same fate as that of Alexandria, if the same summons had been given to devastation. But intercourse, and frequent intercourse, there must have been between the rulers and the subjects; of two languages, one must necessarily have become more common; the manners, the taste, and the knowledge of each must have been developed; and genuine merit wants nothing but time to secure its ascendancy. It is this predominance which converts the Tartar into a Chinese, and which, if it did not make the Frank a Greek, communicated an impression of Greek superiority, and excited a wish of rising above the mediocrity of their own pretensions.

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In the polite arts the Greeks had been for some time stationary, perhaps retrograde; but they possessed, and might have used, some of the most finished productions of antiquity. These silent memorials, aided by the splendour of their court and the luxury of their capital, kept attention awake, and prevented the stagnation of genius. Of these models of elegance, and of their extensive and exquisite manufactories, a valuable catalogue was exhibited at this very period, and was converted by the barbarism of the Franks into a list of losses. But enough was left to rouse emulation from its slumber, and the artist was presented on all sides with samples of elegance and incitements to excellence. The painter, the sculptor, the statuary, or such at least as had those dispositions dormant in them, might find admirable copies, or tolerable masters. The rude architect of the West, whose best efforts had been confined to a massy baronial castle, could not view without admiration and improvement that variety of edifices, in which splendour, elegance, and convenience were united. And

even the mechanical artist might learn in the commodiousness of oriental inventions how at once to spare time and expence, and add to comfort. To their decided skill in the arts, a compliment and a tribute had been paid by the third Abdalrhaman, the most magnificent of the Spanish Ommiades, in drawing from this metropolis those artists who were employed to embellish his own. But it is unnecessary to insist on these points, since no truth was ever felt more sensibly by the spectators; and the Latin historians of the Crusade seem lost in admiration of the extent and splendour of this noble city.

If we follow the Crusaders to the immediate scene of action we shall find Asia, in respect to cultivation, exceeding Italy itself, by far the most refined part of Europe. We have in particular seen what the Arabians were, to what a state of improvement they carried the arts and sciences, and with what enthusiasm they propagated them. Damascus had been the seat of government of the Ommiades, and at the period of this invasion retained a real or a
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fancied pre-eminence. Of the Caliphs of Bagdad many were scholars, and most of them patrons. Not only their courts were crowded with learned men; but every branch of their power, their governors and emirs, even the rivals of their arms, the very subverters of their empire in Egypt, Africa and Spain, collected men of genius under the standard of their patronage. The Turks themselves, introduced into the Arabian armies, like the Goths and the Huns into those of Rome, more easily assumed the mould of the national character; and even that ruder tribe, whose violence and exactions forced Europe into arms, soon insensibly coalesced with the predominant temper of the country. It was the successors of Zingis Khan who swept away before them, like a tempest, every memorial of learning and the arts.

But I shall proceed to sketch the advantages which, on this theatre of his exertions, the Crusader might receive, and which, on his return, he might import into his native country. Of these some would be lost on indolent or unsusceptible minds; but

several, as we shall see, were enforced by a stern necessity. They may be shortly and distinctly exhibited under an arranged view.

... 1. Commercial.—With the exception of Italy, Europe was very ill-informed of the true nature of commerce. Nations which possessed the most valuable staple materials hastened to dispose of them to the best bidder, and contentedly bought them back, when manufactured, at the most exorbitant rate. This implies a superior knowledge in one of the parties; and when that knowledge happened to be equal, a hasty barter, on the principle of instant relief, constituted the practice of European trade. The most inattentive observers must have remarked a material difference in the ideas and practice of the Orientals; they could not but be struck with the establishment, the process, and the use of manufactures. They must have observed the accumulated benefits of an extensive navigation, and the affluence and luxury imparted by a successful commerce.—Of what they saw something was out of their reach, but much was left
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to imitate and make their own, much to excite their hopes and stimulate their diligence. The possession and the use of the silk-worm and the sugar-cane, those necessities in an age of luxury, might perhaps, in a desponding moment, be deemed hopeless and unattainable; but in the extension and division of their manufactures they would trace and acquire a thousand useful novelties and important secrets. The construction of the windmill was a scientific operation, its use was an obvious blessing, its invention was an honour to the East, and its importer into Europe a benefactor to the species. Were the advantages of the Crusades confined only to the points we have just enumerated, who will deny that some reparation was already made for the lavish sacrifice of property and life?

2. Geographical. — Without travelling, and actual observation, the science of geography can make no advances, and of this advantage the crusaders had full enjoyment. The generality of Europe was totally and deplorably ignorant of the relative situation of countries and towns beyond the narrow confines

confines of their own personal survey; and even those who led the forces of Christendom to the conquest of Asia knew little of the great outlines of its extent, and still less of its division into principalities and states. When they set their foot in Palestine they expected to find every place mentioned in scripture with the same ease as a modern city in the territory of their neighbours; and those who professed a greater accuracy trusted to traditional reports, or decided from the erroneous statement of the ancient geographers. They had now opportunities of information presented to them which they *dared* not to neglect. Their immediate wants, their personal safety, the security of their armies, these obliged them to explore the course of rivers, to trace the extent of mountains, to mark the boundaries and bearings of provinces. This ignorance had been in a variety of instances fatal in the first Crusade, when Babylon was sometimes supposed to be the Bagdad of one caliph, and sometimes the Grand Cairo of another; cities built ages after its destruction. The knowledge thus dearly acquired,

and

and deeply impressed, was not merely of local and temporary use, but was treasured up for information and detail, enabled future observers to make a further progress, and laid the foundation of the revival of this science with those useful improvements it has since received.

3. Military.—The reader may perhaps smile at the idea of military attainments having any connexion with the interests of learning. But he will admit that an enlarged knowledge of this art has a tendency to diminish the horrors of war; that engagements happen seldomer and are more decisive; and that those cities now cheerfully submit to a pecuniary composition which might formerly have shared the calamity of a general massacre. Besides, tactics are the *direct* fruit of science; the best mathematician must be the best engineer of the rudest artillery, and probably the best general. It is certain that the military student of the twelfth century could not find a better school than Palestine. In the physical quality of courage, both parties might probably be equal; but in order, arrangement,

ment, and discipline, the Orientals then boasted and enjoyed a superiority, the consequence of their superior science, which time, from the same cause, has at last transferred to the nations of the West. That the Saracens very diligently enlarged the circle of their military knowledge, may be proved from their adoption of the *feu gregois* of the Greeks, so terrifying in its forms and effects to many of the French cavaliers. Prejudice was no obstacle to their improvement, and they were glad to learn from their enemies the arts of destruction. It is curious to observe a yet subsisting proof of the dread the rival combatants alternately excited. Those monstrous heads which frown upon us from our village sign-posts, and terrify our children, are the traditional, but exaggerated transcripts of the crusaders feelings. On the other hand, the prowess of our Richard Cœur de Lion has become proverbial in the East; his name still silences the unruly child better than manual correction; and the rider of a starting horse asks the animal whether he sees Richard in a bush.

But

But in the midst of war our adventurers had an opportunity of learning something more valuable than military skill. At the head of the Saracens, in the third Crusade, we find Saladin, before whose name and merits the pretensions of Philip, and even the renown of Richard himself, fade away. He appears to have possessed some literature and more science, and in the progress of his conquests respected the arts. His virtues afforded a noble subject of European imitation, whose importation might have softened the ferocious spirit of the countries they had left behind them. Whilst he practised towards himself the restraint and abstinence of an ascetic, towards others his indulgence and liberality were unbounded; and the far-famed Oriental virtue of generosity was even surpassed in his example. His clemency was as conspicuous as Cæsar's, and is certainly much less suspicious. Their conduct at the respective sieges of Acres and Jerusalem is a severe, but faithful touchstone of the merits of the Asiatic and the English hero. Other virtues were exemplified in his person; and though moral

perfection exists only in a picture of the imagination, the life of Saladin exhibited a character which his rivals would have done well to imitate, and which would not have disgraced the aspirants after christian excellence. The virtues and good qualities of a chief are not a proof, but they may be considered as a presumption, that his troops, in some respects, participate his merits; more particularly in fluctuating governments, where valour or policy confers the king's or the leader's title. In hereditary states a passive submission to authorised successions is expected and enforced; and no judgment can be formed of the general character of the subjects. But where the people confer the diadem, they canvass the merits, and decide the claims of the rival candidates, and, in a distant degree, may be supposed to possess some of the requisites and qualities they approve.

4. Political.—It may seem odd to refer to the East for political advantages, but facts will speak best for themselves. I know that almost as far back as history extends,

extends, a despotic tyranny disgraces the Oriental annals, and I am aware that when the Arabians adopted the philosophy and science of the Greeks, they could not grasp their generous love for freedom. At the time of the Crusades no improvement in the principle had taken place, but experience had considerably mellowed the practice; the deformity of despotism was veiled by an imposing appearance, and a ready execution of the will of government and a well-regulated police were striking novelties for the European visitant. If these did not go the length of recommending an arbitrary power, they would shew the utility of strengthening the hands of the monarch, and strike at the root of those lawless aristocracies which spread confusion and terror over Europe. Philosophic minds might rise to the superior skill of deducing the possible existence of a limited monarchy, in which the power of the sovereign should coalesce with the dignity of the noble and the freedom of the people; the most unphilosophic would be forced upon observations that paved the way for wholesome maxims

maxims and reasonable principles of government. Speculation might extend these probabilities further; but it is at least *certain* that the affize of Jerusalem, which, as a system of government crowned the military toils of Godfrey of Bouillon, was established at the close of the first Crusade, and was obviously superior, on the ground of wisdom and liberty, to any form of government then existing in the West. It is likewise equally certain, that though no produce of Oriental wisdom, it was first familiarised to European eyes in the latitude of Palestine. Whatever it was, and with whatever advantages attended, it owes its existence entirely to the Crusades.

At home the good effects of the Crusades, in a political view, have never been disputed. They may be traced in the dispersion of the overgrown aristocratical fortunes and the increase of the monarchical prerogative. They appear in the destruction of those ideas which confounded man with a beast of burden; in the emancipation of predial slaves, and the growing independence of the feudatory tenants; in the enlarged

enlarged jurisdiction of cities and towns, and the establishment of civil and political rights by the solemnities of public grants and recorded charters. To the Crusades it was owing that at last, through the perplexed and laboured system of feudal tyranny, the rights of man appear, and from this period the dawn of a rational and dignified freedom strikes upon the historic observer. It is here he finds something that may atone for the mischief of this knight-errantry of two centuries, something that calls upon those who hold, that in every age and country liberty has ever been the best ally of learning, to own, with gratitude, the influence of the Crusades on this honourable and important connexion.

It is so difficult to become minute without growing tedious, that I shall wave the statement of further particulars, though I could point out the Crusades as the immediate source of a variety of new tastes, sensations, and ideas, and just consider how far a proof might be established by the crusader's conduct on his return. The immediate effects appeared of his communi-

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cation

cation with the East. The courts of those princes, and the halls of those barons, who had been engaged in these enterprises would offer an enlarged comment on our text. A new taste in their buildings, a laboured pageantry of state magnificence, the rich manufactures, and glittering jewels of the East; these struck the attention of every observer, and could not escape the notice of the monkish historian, who seemed to have eyes only for his convent. The generality and suddenness of the adoption of these novelties prove the source of their importation; and as imitation uniformly falls short of its professed original, we must infer that this magnificent apparatus, and the arts on which it was superstructed, were of a higher stamp in their Eastern brilliancy than in the transmitted copies. The effects of the Crusades on the manners, poetry, and literature, were equally striking, and, as they are yet more important, will demand, in the course of another chapter, particular notice. But of the advantages brought forward in this hasty view, many were undoubtedly serviceable to the cause

of learning, and none were useless for the purpose of general improvement. There was, in fact, no class of adventurers who migrated into the East, from the general to the meanest of his soldiers, who had not an opportunity of increasing their knowledge and enlarging their minds, and who did not feel the spirit of curiosity and inquiry stimulated in the very spot best calculated for its full gratification.

Nor was learning without its favourable circumstances, though such communications as have taken place since the revival of letters were then utterly impracticable. To impart knowledge and to receive it, a common language is necessary; but this in the Crusades was vainly sought from the prejudice of the Orientals or the ignorance of the Franks; prejudice which confined all excellence to one tongue, ignorance which contented itself with the first sounds that caught its ears. The Greeks were far more advanced in their intellectual progress, and though insufferably vain of their own language, did not disdain, for the purpose of improvement, to read, to study,

and to translate the works of the Latins. Had the Franks met them in their literary advances, the revival of letters might have been anticipated by two centuries. But the soil only was preparing ; it was full early to commit the seeds to its bosom, and we must wait the season of vegetation before we enjoy the harvest.

C H A P. V.

*Effects of the Crusades on Chivalry, Romance,
and the Provençal Poetry—Rise of the Tuscan
School.*

My subject now calls upon me, after these general observations on the advantages of the Crusades, to consider their effects on Chivalry, Romance, and the Provençal Poetry. I must endeavour to be concise, though I can hardly hope to be satisfactory on these interesting subjects.

Chivalry was the fairest flower that grew in the northern wilderness, and the Goths have an honourable and exclusive claim to its production. The Greek and Roman women were uniformly excluded from public view, and bore little part in public estimation; they were confined to the exercise of the domestic virtues, and found their reward in the applause of a private circle. The female character assumed a new consequence on the establishment of

*Effects of
the Cru-
sades on
Chivalry.*

the Gothic governments in Europe. Under the idea of being endowed with divine and prophetic qualities women were called to public councils, and sometimes entrusted with the more active office of executing their resolves. It was a barbarous, but a shrewd suggestion, that predictions were best completed by those who made them. Their imaginary qualifications were endeared by the possession of a real virtue. Their admirers demanded and found, in the objects of their adoration, a strict and rigid chastity; but as the equality of the sexes could be supported only by a reciprocity of merit, the men aspired on their side to the praise of heroic valour. These virtues long served to defend, reward, and perpetuate each other; they were encouraged, in a peculiar manner, by the temper, the modes, and the circumstances of the times, and found ample room for growth and expansion in the feudal governments, into which all the Gothic conquests finally subsided.

It was there, amid a thousand little baronial monarchies, that Chivalry assumed those forms, alternately gay and serious, which

which still interest the observer. In those governments of epitome and courts of mimic royalty, amid invasion and distress, the succour and the combat, in the splendor of victory and the rewards of the fair, a thousand incentives were continually rising to form the passions and the sentiments into the mould of Chivalry. Even when peace, or rather when a truce brought with it a short repose, the public lists, the gallant tourney, the applauding fair, the thronged hall, music, song, every thing, and almost in every place, concurred to keep the mind in the same undeviating direction to its favourite object.

Still the advantages Chivalry received from the feudal system were trifling and unimportant in comparison with those it derived from the Crusades. It is easier to conceive than to state what effect these Oriental travels and adventures would have on minds thus pre-disposed; but it cannot be denied that whatever at home was particularly favourable to the establishment of the chivalrous system, was there repeated on an enlarged and truly noble scale. The

very object of this grand confederacy was in the highest degree awful and impressive, and it was impossible to compare the expulsion of a warlike nation from the seat of Christianity with the attack of a brother baron, or the resistance of a petty monarch. Devotion was a stronger principle of incitement than love or fame, and yet it superseded neither; indeed to the latter it gave new energy. The knight, whose praises were bounded by a province, now stood on a theatre that commanded the attention of Europe and Asia. The picture was heightened by the ideas of distance and danger, and the doubts and shadowings of futurity gave effect and relief to the whole. If we suppose our gallant adventurers, with minds thus previously formed, once landed in a country sanctified to their apprehension, we shall find them spectators, and often actors, in scenes splendid and interesting beyond the range of European conception, in the highest degree terrible or affecting, and exciting the sublime or the pathetic with an irresistible energy. The vast armies that were brought
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into the field and met in action, the constant and mingling operation of the most determined hostility, and the most generous emulation, these must produce the most important events, and furnish impressions and sentiments that could die only with memory and with life.

The effects were visible in a variety of forms, and the Crusades is the date of Chivalry's assuming a systematic appearance. Knighthood, the emblem of its profession, was invested with extraordinary splendours; sovereigns themselves received the initiation into its order from the hands of distinguished warriors, but first experienced its previous discipline and preliminary forms. Armorial bearings were invented to reward merit and distinguish families; and the science of heraldry, if in these days it be deemed important, may be traced back to Palestine. New institutions arose to promote Chivalry at the expence of reason and propriety, and the lay-orders were expected to produce prodigies in uniting, with the exercise of war, the practice of religious duty. As those who perform
great

great actions are desirous of their being widely known and long remembered, such as professed the ability to secure these advantages might depend on patronage and favour as the condition or the price of their services.

Effects of
the Cru-
sades on
Romance.

At this period Romance was the means, and romancers were the artists. Its origin is obscure and has been darkened by dispute, but it signifies little whether we owe its importation to the Goths or the Arabians; probably neither of them did more than furnish a few improvements, and it might spring directly from the direction of the spirit of Chivalry into a literary channel. It was, however, a little after the first crusade that those two fabulous chronicles made their appearance, which served, like the *Iliad* and the *Æneid*, as complete models for future attempts. I mean that falsely ascribed to Archbishop Turpin, and our Geoffrey of Monmouth's translation from an Armoric chronicle.

It is obvious how much the genius of Romance must have been assisted by the Crusades, and what a fund of new and inexhaustible materials would be furnished to
fancy

fancy and ingenuity, by a new country, new heroes, and new machinery. That indefinite desire of hearing and relating wonders, directed by the predominance of Chivalry to particular objects, had now its fullest gratifications. The author might not only quit the narrow regions of truth, but was barely expected to keep within the wide range of probability; and the reader, by an accommodating sympathy, might follow him in his flight, without being disgusted with his extravagancies. A distant scene, like a distant period, gives the writer an arbitrary power of supposing almost all that he pleases; and we admit without reluctance, what we cannot contradict without difficulty. Romance was soon advanced. Arthur, and the knights of his round table, Charlemagne with Roland and his compeers, saw their circle enlarged by additional heroes, by Godfrey and Tancred, Richard and Saladin. The machinery of the piece received the most striking embellishments from the introduction of Oriental inventions. The horn of Roland was eclipsed by greater wonders, the speed of a horse

horse outstripped by the flight of a dragon and a griffin; and Merlin himself with all his charms can be considered only as qualified for the humble agent of an Asiatic enchanter. Mezeray, the French historian, goes a great deal too far in deriving Romance entirely from the Crusades; but he might have said, that they contributed in the most essential degree to its improvement, and, as was said of Augustus at Rome, that they found it brick and left it marble.

Effects of
Chivalry on
the Pro-
vençal Po-
etry.

But upon the whole, they promoted still more essentially the improvement and extension of the Provençal Poetry. The Troubadours were an order of men who subsisted in the middle ages by the arts of poetry and music. Lineal descendants, as it should seem, of the scald and the bard, they were equally well received in the castles of the great; but they had degenerated from their severe morals and exemplary manners. Alfred would have blushed to assume the dress of a Troubadour. In the decline of the art, they consisted principally of the younger brothers and relations of noble families, who preferred ease to reputation,
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and the luxury of the hall to the dangers of the field. The Jongleurs appear to have sung, without aspiring to compose, what had been written by the Troubadours ; and often exercised the tricks of the juggler to suspend attention by the variety of exhibition. However, during the twelfth century, the art was in higher hands. Many of the clergy, avowedly the most learned body of men, did not disdain its exercise, and an archbishop might have claimed the laurel with the general suffrage. The first Troubadour, who obtained high distinction for his poetical exertions, was William Count of Poitou ; and in these days of its better fortune, princes, kings, and emperors enrolled themselves as members of the gay science. Frederic Barbarossa was no mean proficient. The story of Richard himself, a Troubadour, and Blondel, is well known to every class of readers, and has obtained possession both of the French and the English stage. Many baronial chiefs south of the Loire were less eminent for their martial prowess than their poetical attainments.

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Of the languages of Europe, formed by the corruption of the Latin, the Provençal was undoubtedly the first in which memory attempted to preserve the works of imagination, and the Troubadour's was unquestionably the first school of poetry which rose after the extinction of the Roman. Criticism has divided their works into gallant, historical, satirical, didactic, and pastoral.—1. Their amatory verses, however bulky, have not now much to recommend them. Love, as a passion, is grossly conceived; as a sentiment it is made to play round the head, but it comes not near the heart. The lover's was a trial of wit, in which he said all that occurred, and the rest became an exercise of memory, which collected common places, and repeated old stories.—2. The historical. These, as their name imports, illustrate the public history of the period, but they are more valuable as the display and record of manners and sentiments. Literature would have been an essential gainer if they had been more select in their subjects, or more copious in their

their narration ; for the only historians of the age were obscure monks buried in the gloom of the cloister, unacquainted with life, and, in other respects, as ignorant as they were superstitious.—3. Their satirical productions were principally personal invectives, and injurious attacks directed against the enemies of the present patron, their own rivals in love or verse, and not unfrequently against the loose ecclesiastics of the period. They become more interesting when they brand the vices of the age, and exhibit a picture, or a caricature, of manners and opinions.—4. Their didactic pieces were few in number, and confined in their scope and tendency. They comprise instructions to the candidates for Chivalry, and chalk out for the young Troubadour the paths he is to tread to pleasure, profit, and reputation. In these the driness of advice is tempered by occasional gaiety, and in a few instances recommended by the beauties of agreeable fiction. Some moral sketches may be numbered among their happier efforts.—5. Their pastorals are equally rare in number, but in merit
and

and value very inferior. They lived too much in courts to have a relish for the country; and though they sometimes borrow an embellishment or a simile from the stream, the grove, or the meadow, they soon forget themselves, and return to the more congenial element of the baronial residence.—6. Their most agreeable, and upon the whole their most useful performances, it is difficult to arrange under any one head, since they occasionally discuss every subject that occurs; these are their *tensons* or alternate couplets of contest and altercation, in which the rivals exhibited their powers before a brilliant audience, advanced themselves in their art, and gave rise to much pleasing and ingenious discussion. The question, as we must suppose, was generally of an amatory or chivalrous nature, debated by the candidates, and decided by the audience or the judges. It was these *tensons* which laid the foundation of the courts of love at Toulouse and in Picardy, which had the advantage of regular meetings and attractive prizes. The dramatic art seems not to have been at all understood

understood by the Troubadours, and the *Heresia dels Preyres* has no pretensions to a place amongst theatrical productions. We must look out somewhere else for the origin of the drama in Europe, since here we find simple dialogue, without division, object, character, or plot.

But with all its defects, the poetry of the Troubadours had its use, and may be considered as the intermediate stage between Gothic rudeness and Italian excellence. That the Crusades contributed most essentially to its improvement, might be proved by very authentic documents. The first Troubadour on record was a Crusader, William Count of Poitou. Many of the nobility who sailed in the first expedition were themselves of that number; and all, as an essential part of their household establishment, took with them their domestic poets. Louis the Seventh in particular not only entertained them liberally at his court, but made them part of his retinue, and in the second Crusade carried them with him into Palestine. The ancient chronicles of France tell us, with characteristical simplicity, and

in their own phrase, that *legions of poets* embarked in this enterprise. How manfully they sung their Tyrtæan strains, to encourage the bold and stimulate the sluggish, an appeal to their own poems will shew; and we must gratefully acknowledge our obligations to the Crusades for rearing this early fruit of poetical genius.

It is singular that the merits and exertions of the Troubadours should not bear a proportion to their rewards and encouragement. Known in the courts of monarchs, the castles of barons, and the marts of commerce; respected, caressed, often enriched, the road to excellence lay fully open before them. Rivals they had none, for such they can hardly be called who were shut up in their convents from the living world, and were fit only to transcribe the manuscripts which were mouldering in their libraries. Their name, honours, and language extended far and wide, and every country can boast its Troubadours. With all these incitements and attractions they stood sluggishly still in the course, appear to have thought little of literary excellence
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and poetical immortality, expressed their first ideas almost in their first phrases, and eagerly snatched a temporary reward and an ephemeral fame.

Though the Troubadours themselves appear to have gained no footing in England, which indeed they were not likely to do in a country insulated at once by situation and language, their brothers, the Minstrels, could not complain of want of due attention. They were the favourite attendants of the great, who probably thought that the *fiend's might* would be destroyed by music and verse, with good Bishop Grossetete, who, to repel any sudden diabolical attack, took care to have his Minstrel sleep in an adjoining chamber. The convents received them with careffes, and festivities would have been incomplete and entertainments languid without their presence. As the Troubadours had established, from one end of Europe to the other, a common dialect, if any man of genius had risen amongst them it might probably have become the general language of Europe; but the art

declined in their hands, rivals arose after the settlement of the European languages, and the close of the thirteenth century saw the extinction of this poetical race. At last they were proscribed in Italy itself, and a surly statute amongst ourselves, though of a much later date, classes the Minstrels with rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars.

The good effects of their labours soon manifested themselves. They introduced a love for reading and a taste for poetry, their profession was liberally encouraged, and a foundation laid for polite literature. In a flourishing reign of two centuries such were the extent and prevalence of the Provençal Poetry, that the wits of every clime were content to borrow its language and adopt its fables. At last, in Italy, a set of men arose who resolved to cultivate their native tongue, and address themselves to their countrymen at large. At the head of these was Brunetti Latini the master, and Guy Cavalcanti the friend, of Dante; but it was that poet who, with Petrarch and Boccace, may be considered as having given a mortal blow, first to the honours, and ultimately

timately to the existence, of the Troubadours.

And this, their warmest advocate must admit, was, in its result, of eminent service to the cause of literature. The Provençals, with a slight exception or two, appear to have been merely the children of Nature, uninformed by books, unacquainted even with Latin, the ecclesiastical and learned language, defective in address, and novices in art. The best flights of their imagination were generally unequal and always short; stores of memory they had none, their images were drawn from a narrow and uniform horizon; and they might, with some justice, be compared to the *Improvisatori* of modern days, if, in condition of life and public estimation they did not claim a superiority. Poetry, it is true, to be eminently successful, must speak to the heart, and can be founded only in nature; but in that respect the Tuscan school, which superseded the Provençal, stands upon a level with it, and, in addition, was deeply imbued with classical learning. The Provençal, upon the whole, can be considered

only as the twilight of modern poetry; while the Tuscan, which immediately succeeded it, broke out with a lustre and splendor which we still view with admiration, and which has never yet been equalled by four centuries of the best efforts of genius and learning.

C H A P. VI.

Effects of the Civil and Canon Laws considered in a literary View.—Probable Influence of some collateral Causes.—Commerce.

THE Roman Civil Law may be stated as a leading cause of the revival of learning over Europe. Though it was apparently extinguished by the successive invasions and establishments of the barbarous nations, there is some reason for supposing that it served them as an indistinct guide in the fabrication of their own imperfect codes. The Theodosian had been familiar to the West; a diligent observer might trace the obligations of the Burgundian, Lombard, and Salick laws; and the capitularies of Charlemagne argue an acquaintance with Roman jurisprudence. Ensuing troubles, and, above all, the ignorance of the tenth century, were fatal enemies to the progress or security of any knowledge of any sort. In the eleventh, some of the

Italian cities, grown rich and populous, had secured to themselves the exercise of municipal rights, asserted the power of the sword, and were disposed to allow nothing to the Imperial authority, but high-sounding and useless titles. As in this dawn of independence, the magistrates exercised the judicial power, they were necessarily obliged to acquaint themselves with the existing laws. In Italy, such as had been introduced by the Lombards, formed the basis of the municipal system generally received; but other laws were occasionally admitted at the choice of the parties, or by the direction of the judge, kept the public mind in continual suspense, and increased the natural complexity of the science. As necessity is a powerful teacher, it soon became obvious that these rude systems were but ill-calculated for societies rising into affluence and politeness; and a way was thus insensibly preparing for the Roman jurisprudence, the multiplied analogy of whose cases might best consult and relieve their new wants and complicated interests.

Its name had never been extinguished, its merits were not questioned, the attention of the learned had been turned to its revival ; and it was professed by Irnerius at Bologna before its boasted discovery at Amalphi. But it is probable that neither this reputation, nor the public respect, nor any wants of a social or civil nature, would have been sufficient to secure its general reception in Europe ; and, therefore, to this fortunate discovery may be attributed the rapidity of its circulation, and the permanence of its establishment.

A faint knowledge of the Canon seems to have preceded that of the Civil Law. As early as the sixth century, Dionysius the Little, better known as the inventor of the Christian era, endeavoured to deserve well of the Latin church, by forming, what is yet wanted, though the Greek boasted two, a collection of its Canons. This proved a mine of wealth and power to the Roman pontiff, rather than a treasury of knowledge to the Roman church. To this collection, obviously imperfect, Isidore Mercator, or Peccator, in due time, added the false Decretals,

cretals, enhancing at any rate the power and pretensions of the popes, and leaving posterity at a loss, which to wonder at most, the impudence or the success of the forgery. This collection was imported from Spain into Italy, Germany, and France, appeared in form at the council of Aix la Chapelle, and found its way into the capitularies of the French kings. All this appears extraordinary, but criticism did not exist to detect these counterfeits, and credulity was disposed to admit all that was proposed under the guise of religion, and authenticated by the stamp of pontifical authority.

While the lamp of Irnerius illuminated the difficulties of the Civil Law, Gratian undertook, at the same time, to conduct the students of Bologna through the hitherto untrodden regions of ecclesiastical jurisprudence. His abilities appear to have been equal to those of his cotemporary; his views were as extensive, and his success was as complete. He reduced into a regular body its scattered rules; he classed for their mutual illustration those Canons in
which

which any principle of union could be found; and, where it failed, reconciled, with skill and science, the appearance or the reality of disagreement. He exhibited many instances of their successful application to existing circumstances; and his performance, if the adoption and support of the Decretals could possibly be overlooked, might claim a considerable portion of the honours it enjoyed. Such as it was, it became the foundation of the Canon Law, as established over Europe; and its text, sanctioned by the heads of the church, and implicitly admitted by its members, obtained almost a supreme authority. As the civil law had been of eminent service as a guide, an instructor, and an interpreter to the canonists; so the Decree, consisting of the opinions of the fathers, and the definitions of the councils, was framed to answer the Pandects. The Decretals were placed on a level with the Code; and the Extravagantes, in the form of an appendix, were classed with the Novels.

It is not material to weigh the Civil and the Canon Laws in the scale of criticism, or
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to shew in what respects the latter fell obviously short of the former. Their influence and their services were conjunctive ; and wherever one was professed, the other was taught, and often by the same professor. Not only the greatest harmony reigned between them, but the wisest means were adopted to secure and perpetuate their union. As far as they could, they were made to illustrate each other's meaning, and enforce their respective decrees ; and when differences unavoidably occurred, their professors had established certain principles which regulated the cession or the enforcement of their particular claims. But the Civil, from the more enlarged sphere of its operations, obtained higher consideration, was more diligently studied, and more laboriously commented. Its progress was rapid, its success astonishing. Irnerius had the address to prevail on Lothaire the Second to adopt it through Italy, not only in the lecture-room, but at the bar. He introduced the title and ceremonial of the doctorate in his school at Bologna, which soon passed over Europe ; which Paris adopted

adopted in her theological schools, and well bestowed, in her first distribution of academical honours, on Petrus Lombardus, the famous master of sentences.

Italy was the first, and long continued the most brilliant theatre of its success. What the princess Anna Comnena said of Europe precipitating itself on Asia, in the rage of hostility, might be applied to the other parts of Europe with respect to Italy in the enthusiasm of this new study. An innumerable body of scholars hastened to Bologna, and the other Italian schools, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and thronged round the oracles of Roman jurisprudence. No less than four professors succeeded Irnerius in the same university. At a conference on a political question, held about thirty years after the discovery at Amalphi, Frederick Barbarossa saw countless swarms of civilians buzzing round him; and before the century closed, there was scarcely a city of Italy which did not exult in the learning of its professors, or the number of its students.

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As ubiquity is one of the noblest properties of learning, it could not long be confined by the Alps and the Appennines. It was soon carried by Placentinus into France ; and by Vacarius, at the solicitation of Theobald archbishop of Canterbury, into England. It extended itself gradually to most of the nations on the continent, where it obtained, with some shades of difference, the same establishment as in Italy. The first enthusiasm of fondness was checked in England by the prohibition of Stephen, obtained probably by the active jealousy of the theologians. Daniel Morlay, of whom we have before made honourable mention, complained that the Roman laws were in such high estimation, that Aristotle was set aside for Caius and Titius ; and that the traditions of Ulpian were written in letters of gold. Roger Bacon saw with increased concern the sacrifice of his favourite arts and sciences to this fashionable study. But its progress, upon the whole, in this country, must be considered as dilatory, whatever to the contrary may have been said or argued by Selden.

Selden. Our attachment to the Common Law soon began to discover itself, and these boasted laws were at last content to be admitted upon a more humble footing than in any other country, as submissive and useful auxiliaries to the established jurisprudence, and suffered to act only under its commands or by its consent.

In considering its uses to the causes of learning, we may first sketch a few of those more general advantages by which it was attended. Hitherto study had been desultorily undertaken, meanly encouraged, and feebly prosecuted. The establishment of the Civil Law in the schools and universities of Europe trained men regularly to the pursuits of science, excited a zeal for inquiry, and fostered the spirit of emulation. From this time the military character sunk in the public estimation, and the gown shared the smiles of royalty with the sword. But it was not by respect or by honour alone that men were called to this study; the solid assurance of advantage sweetened their toils. The Roman law soon became the golden study of its time, filled the purses of

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of its followers, and effected all that chymistry promised and credulity expected. As it ripened by degrees into a forensic and practical science, in which merit opened the road to distinction, its teachers and professors redoubled their diligence, increased their auditors, and enlarged their salaries. To those of their pupils, who put their lessons successfully into practice, their clients hastened to give substantial proofs of their gratitude; diligence or eloquence was largely rewarded, and the Civil, as the Common Law since in England, accumulated riches and founded families. The splendid promise of Justinian was completed in the eyes of Europe; and the fortunate students of his laws obtained the public honours, and filled the political offices of almost every state in which they flourished.

We must admit that it was more glorious for Rome to have conquered the world by her laws and wisdom than by her arms, and we may call her, with Claudian, mother of arms and laws; but a large deduction must be made from the definition of Tribonian, when he includes in her jurisprudence "the know-

knowledge of all things divine and human." On the other side, it is certainly too much narrowed by its simple description, as "the science of what is just and unjust." However, in adverting to its more particular services to learning, it may be briefly noticed as a system of equity, a rule of reason, and a model of style.—1. As a system of equity it was incontestably superior to any thing Europe had seen since the destruction of the Western Empire. To find and enforce justice was its object. By the exposition of a few simple principles it unravelled the natural or designed complexity of civil concerns. It balanced doubts and difficulties with a nicer hand and a truer aim; it ascertained the genuine nature of evidence, and settled proper modes of judicial decision. It revived the empire of good sense, and gave a fatal blow to those trials by ordeal, invented by folly and consecrated by superstition, in which Justice found, on every experiment, the chances multiplied against her. As legislation is the highest and best act of human wisdom, so to consider it in its work subsisting

as a whole, demands, and would exercise the vigour of a powerful mind. But to study its parts and its bearings, trace its connexions, reconcile its difficulties, to analyse or combine its detached properties, and all this with a constant reference to equity, was the duty and the task of the students of the Roman jurisprudence, and demanded great exertions of mind and unremitting perseverance of labour. Under this view it must be admitted to have been an excellent school of probationary exercise. — 2. As a rule of reason. As equity is the object, so reason must be the guide of jurisprudence. Before men were accustomed to trace their way by speculation and conjecture; now they had extended before them a sober and unerring light. If logic is the art of using reason well, and communicating it to others, where was it taught with such success as in the school of the civilians? At the very threshold of the science the exercise of reason was demanded, and without it, a further progress opened a labyrinth of difficulties. It obliged the mass of students to pause, to examine, and decide, and, in its complete

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consequences, led up minds of a higher stamp to philosophic contemplation. Throughout it abounded in conspicuous explanations, happy illustrations, and appropriate definitions, and obviously laid the foundation of good taste in neatness, clearness, and precision. Dialectics, as forming a science and taught in the schools, has been termed the armour of the public speaker; but a mind well imbued with the Roman law was strong enough to reject its use, and might contend with surer weapons. Men were taught by it to argue freely and rationally, not contractedly and technically; to overpower and convince, by a series of solid arguments, rather than to surprise by a dilemma, or outwit by a syllogism; and to impress conviction rather than induce it. Besides, the Civil Law, in an eminent degree, promoted the study of moral philosophy, which either occurs directly in every page, or in the course of common reflection must necessarily be deduced. Nor was it less favourable to practical philosophy, in other words, to a knowledge of the world, and exhibited the best means of the most suc-

teful conduct. But it is unnecessary to detail the services it administered in every department of reason and good sense. It was so extensive in its scope as to accustom the mind to an ample range, and so minute in its detail as to exercise and fatigue the keenest perspicacity. It went through every profession and every art, and required and imparted multifarious knowledge. I need not insist that any study which demands these qualifications in its candidates, and opened such a career for intellectual exercise, must be considered as a great and permanent source of advantage to the general cause of science and learning.

3. But, as it afforded a model of style, it was conspicuously useful in a literary view. No scholar will now go the length of its professors, and assert, if the Latin tongue was lost it might be renewed and revived in the pandects; nor, on the other hand, would it be safe to sally out with the verbal critics, and storm it in its entrenchments. Truth generally lies between panegyric and censure, and every scholar will admit that the juridical writers experienced less
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than any other class the effects of declining taste; that the dignified rescript of the pre-tor preserved, at every period, the purity of their language, and that neither the civilians nor the emperors in their decrees or answers relaxed from the becoming dignity and propriety of style. Without attempting to explain and estimate the different pretensions of the institutes, the code, and the pandects, though the authority of Laurentius Valla in favour of the latter might be weighed against a host of critics, it has been perhaps truly observed, that with the removal of the crust of Tribonian, and a load of technical terms, as a whole it may be considered as at least worthy the silver age of Roman letters; nor does it seem too flattering to apply to it what Quintilian said of Virgil when comparing him with Homer and his own successors, that he was nearer the *first* than the *last*. As, at the period of its revival, the languages of Europe were yet unformed, and Latin the only medium of communication, scientific, literary, or political, it was eminently serviceable, not only in furnishing an extended

vocabulary of daily use ; but as an ample repository of the elegancies of composition, and a worthy precursor of the classical volumes. In this great merit it seems to stand alone. There is none of the silver ore discoverable in the voluminous productions of scholastic theology, nor where it might be more expected, in the regions of fiction and poetry, in the wonders of romance, and the monotonies of the Leonine verse. The student of the Civil Law was put in full possession of an invaluable treasure of things and words, and if he did not make a proper use of it, could blame only his own inaptitude or indolence.

In closing this part of my subject I may venture briefly to suggest, that there seem three stages of the progress of the Civil Law and its connexion with the literature of Europe. Its first professors, without any assistance from learning, and avowedly ignorant of Greek, confined their attention entirely to the subject before them, which they explained by references to the context, by short glosses, and compendious remarks,

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This will apply to *Itinerus*, *Accursius*, and their cotemporaries. *Bartolus* with his scholars and adherents may be considered as displaying greater powers, occupying a wider sphere of inquiry, and bringing a larger stock of general knowledge to their task. They formed the second class. Both have suffered severely under the lash of verbal criticism; their comments have been compared to the labours of the schoolmen, and their jargon is said to have impeded the progress of useful learning. These civilians certainly had no tincture of classical knowledge, and could not propagate what they did not possess. Besides, had it been so, their refinement had been premature, they would have been barely intelligible to their rude hearers, and the best seeds would have been lost in an ungrateful soil. The charge, however, seems invidious; but if it were just, still the labours of the commentators, at all events, more effectually propagated the *original*, which was the most material point. It will be admitted if a copy of *Virgil* had been early circulated, though accompanied by the

most tasteless comments, learning and taste would have been under essential obligations, not to the expositors, but to the introducers.—But whatever may be the defects of the first and second race of commentators, no one will deny the literary claims of the third of Budè, Alciat, and Cujas. They adorned this study with elegancies, and spread over it the flowers of eloquence and the beauties of polite literature. They founded the school which produced Domat and d'Aguesseau. Thus in the first stages of its progression the Civil Law was of essential service to the general cause of learning, and in the last the obligation was gratefully and abundantly repaid.

Such is our view and such our opinion of the three great causes which principally produced and forwarded the revival of learning in Europe; to these may be added some collateral ones, whose consideration will close the present Chapter. Their number might be easily enlarged; but I shall confine myself not only to the consideration of a few, but restrict my observations upon them to a narrow compass.

1. The

...I. The famous dispute about investitures between the Imperial and the Roman courts, so ambitiously commenced by the latter, so resolutely pursued, and so successfully terminated. This contestation, at once lively and long, affecting deeply the passions or the prejudices of men, brought many a combatant into the field of controversy. The pontiffs soon found the utility of a learned, as well as of an obedient clergy; and the Imperialists, however formidable their party, were not insensible of the value of such useful auxiliaries as wit, learning, and eloquence. These stimulatives had their effects. The clergy felt the harsh necessity of remitting sensual pleasures for intellectual pursuits, and laymen began to aspire to the hitherto forbidden charms and honours of learning. To second these impressions, the leaders of the contending parties spared no liberality or encouragement. They seem about this time to have made an important discovery, that there existed in the ranks of learning an order of men, neither civilians, nor canonists, nor schoolmen; but something greater

greater than all united, men of genius, men born to give by their writings a tone and character to the sentiments of their age. These, or perhaps their prototypes and promise, were now first considered with a respect, formerly paid only to the gown and the sword.—A little after this period, the employment of the scholar's pen succeeded the estimate of his abilities, and a new value was stamped on the literary character throughout Europe.

2. We may incidentally mention, what soon succeeded, the disputes between the clergy of each respective country and the head of the church itself. The attempt on one side to substantiate the dream of infallibility, and the reality of an absolute power; on the other, an assured and decent freedom to maintain their rights; these produced a long and interesting contest. The writers who made their appearance on this occasion possessed vigorous and active powers, but contributed little by their example to neatness or elegance. However in this collision of interests, abuses were exposed, usurpation unveiled, and truth, morality, and religion

religion became gainers on every side; discussion succeeding on discussion produced something at last like the spirit of criticism, expanded the seeds of schism and secession, and insensibly prepared the public mind for the reformation of religion and the revival of learning.

3, Nor must we forget those incessant disputes, the uniform consequence of the feudal system, between the head and the members, the sovereign and the barons of each respective country. This fermentation, whilst it subsisted and when it subsided, was favourable to the cause of learning. When the contending parties found themselves so equally balanced, that the hitherto neglected weight of the people would turn the scale, a different conduct and new attentions became necessary. It was found that to make an efficacious application to these intended allies, sound argument or soft persuasion, an address to the head, or an appeal to the heart, were useful, perhaps indispensable requisites. The orator and the author were alike obliged to accumulate information, to digest their materials,

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and recommend them to notice by the talent of composition. But this could not be done without extending the empire of good sense, without availing themselves of the now rising arts of logic and rhetoric, and without forming their services into an appropriate profession. Here the scholar and the wit alone could excel, and they were eagerly courted into this new and difficult service. The contests of those rude days, it is true, were oftener decided by force of arms than by strength of intellect; but the effects of reason thus embodied in the language of the times might be traced and proved in a variety of salutary changes and beneficial regulations. In a political survey we find serfs emancipated, villains rising to the dignity of freemen, feuds rendered hereditary, and cities enjoying the full exercise of independence; and in a literary view we must observe the liberal encouragement offered to the studies of the Civil and Canon Law; the opening of schools, the establishment of universities, and the whole groundwork laid for an approaching renovation of the taste and literature of the age.

4. It is impossible to overlook the services rendered to learning by Commerce, and yet in its proceedings nothing appears spontaneous and liberal. If we stop a moment to consider its history, we shall find it either absorbed in speculations of advantage; or active in their completion, and in any situation, unwilling to find time, or what it valued still more than time, money, to employ in the service of literature. This unpleasant supposition is too well supported by an appeal to facts. Neither Tyre, when at the height of its commercial splendour; nor its greater descendant Carthage, when it contested the empire of the world; neither Alexandria, when the trade of the East flowed into its ports, nor in later periods when Constantinople and Venice successively enjoyed that lucrative monopoly—did any one of these distinguish itself by a munificent, or even by a creditable attention to the interests of science or learning. Whether, when commerce migrated into the West, the Hanse towns had a better claim to the scholar's gratitude, or whether, at the present moment, the Muses have any subject

subject for elogy in the misfortunes of Holland, past facts and present experience too unequivocally decide.

The conduct of England, indeed, seems to vindicate the genius of trade, but of the patronage experienced by learning, how small a portion can be justly referred to commerce? The art of navigation, and the sciences by which that art is facilitated, applying on the ground of present interest or future advantage, have not been dismissed unrewarded. But what share have tradesmen and factors, agents and merchants, in the munificence that has been extended to learning? Our kings and nobles, our courts and universities, an increasing and discerning Public; these have been the patrons of the English author. The liberality of the bookseller far outstrips the best grounded claims of the most opulent merchant.

Still commerce, though not *designedly*, may be considered as a friend to learning, in the connexion it opens between distant countries, and the reciprocal advantages it communicates; by the ardent spirit of curi-

osity it excites, and the ample means it affords of gratifying that curiosity without satiety. Many parts of learning can be acquired or ascertained only by actual observation and the traveller's research: but these, forming no object of commercial pursuit, are offered only incidentally, and were most wanted in the infancy of learning.

Again, wherever commerce flourishes, fortunes will be made, and when they are made, will be enjoyed. In an improved state of society, men of affluent fortunes naturally call upon poetry and the liberal arts for their pleasing exertions, and reward them with substantial favours. Public amusements, so long as they continue rational, must depend for their support or success on *literary* merit. Private enjoyments in opulent countries would want their highest zest, if wit and humour, information and anecdote, the *scholar's* qualifications, were banished from the table and the fire-side. Literature is thus secure of powerful friends from the certain operation of self-interest; and we may admit that commerce, in its activity or its enjoyment,

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contributes materially to its advancement, though in neither case as a voluntary friend or disinterested patron. It consults its convenience at one season, and its pleasure at another.

In the *application* of these observations, we may remark that commerce was almost annihilated by the Barbarian inroads, and when established governments offered the hope of its revival, it found itself opposed by the grossness of ignorance, the prejudices of birth, and the absurdities of superstition. The Jews, who alone had the sense and spirit to frame and direct a commercial intercourse, were treated with the most shocking barbarity, and though the invention of bills of exchange protected their property, it could afford no security to their persons. They were discouraged in their pursuits, and the happier diligence, or fairer fame of the Lombards, their migrations over Europe, and their establishment of banks, may be considered as placing commerce in its first stage of incidental utility to learning; when it was industrious in its pursuits, moderate in its gains, and not yet

yet studious of its repose and refined in its enjoyments.

That season, however, was not far behind, and may be supposed to begin about the thirteenth century. Constantinople had long flourished in a state of affluence and luxury. Nearer home Venice and Genoa had enriched themselves by a trade with the East, and had tasted the privileged indulgences of affluence. Were we to carry our view through the entire period of the Crusades, we should observe in the favoured seats of trade an influx of greater riches, and the consequent appearance of a splendid and almost general luxury. With these we might connect some favourable occurrences to the interests of learning, more particularly in Italy, which has the honour, and enjoyed the advantage of preceding the rest of Europe at once in the career of commerce and literature.

Even in the North, men's eyes were at last, though slowly, opened to their commercial interests. The Hanse towns, associated with the Flemish cities, soon engrossed the trade, and almost absorbed the

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wealth of these parts of the world. Nor can we deny that in this commercial activity, this pursuit and attainment of riches, Learning enjoyed some advantages, and a few drops of the golden shower from time to time relieved her necessities, or rewarded her exertions.

PART III.

Of the Patronage and Learning of the
Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries.

CHAP. I.

A View of the Causes which contributed to the further Progress of Learning in the Influence of Political Events.—Patronage of the Great.—Establishment of Universities.—Travels of Scholars.

THE effects of the causes we have stated became visible in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; but the revival of learning was gradual, its progress slow. In our view of its state during that period, we shall find, something to commend, though little then occurred in the variety of literary exertions which can please a cor-

rect and cultivated taste; and we must still lament the efforts and labours of misguided genius. However, to connect the revival of learning with its fall, it becomes necessary to consider what it was in this its intermediate state, and to contemplate those earlier and imperfect essays which foretold its final success. Such is the object of the concluding part of our work. The views of the observer are necessarily confined to a contracted theatre; and Italy is the principal, perhaps the only country in which this progress of the mind can be distinctly pursued. In the other parts of Europe, the convulsive genius of the feudal system, still overlaid and stifled the spirit of literature. In Italy alone, a generous freedom had begun to shew itself; the genius of republicanism seemed to revive on the ground of its former triumphs, and an honourable career was opened for art and science. It was from Italy Europe was destined to receive a second time the benefit of civilization and the gift of learning. My inquiries seem properly bounded by its limits; but he would be a rigid critic who should condemn

demn me for passing the Alps, and extending my survey to France, to Spain, or to Britain.

Of the causes of the revival of learning already stated, we may suppose a material but not a uniform operation : to these I shall add a connected view of those more particular assistances by which its progress was still further advanced in Italy. They are found in political events, in the patronage of the great, the establishment of universities, and the travels of scholars. These form the subject of our immediate inquiry. The statement of its science and literature during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, becomes a subsequent and distinct consideration.

In a professed dissertation on this subject, it would be necessary to consider at large the political events of the period before us, which may be reckoned from the settlement of the bloody disputes about investitures to the accession of Rodolphus of Hapsburgh. The influence of German politics on the general state of Italy, and the fluctuation of the various systems of government established there, would demand a se-

rious investigation. I shall confine myself to a few general observations, with such occasional references to the more striking characters of the times, as may explain or illustrate our subject.

It may be generally premised, that the political connections and relations of Italy were such, upon the whole, as had a tendency to invigorate genius and assist learning. With favourable events, it is true, many, incontestably adverse, sometimes occurred; but the balance may safely be struck on the advantageous side. The country seems seldom to have been out of that state of fluctuation and suspense, of success and difficulty, of hope and fear, which keeps the minds and bodies of its inhabitants in constant exercise and vigour. Often did it tremble on the very verge of ruin, yet still rose superior to its misfortunes. After the destruction of the Lombard dominion, there appeared nothing to resist the power of the Eastern emperors, nothing to prevent its becoming a dependent and tributary province; the rising power, and useful interference of the emperors

perors of the West, saved it from that humiliating condition. When these protectors shewed themselves disposed to become its masters, and probably its tyrants, and their Eastern competitors vainly opposed the progress of their arms, a race of Pontiffs rose to vindicate the independence of Italy, and drove back the Imperial eagle beyond the Alps. Again, when these new auxiliaries attempted the same game, and on the spiritual slavery of the country strove to build its temporal bondage, the families established in the different principalities, and the states which yet remained free, encountered them with becoming spirit, and confined them within the boundaries of their territorial donations. It is obvious, if any one of these three contingencies had taken place, Italy must have sunk into the most abject dependence, unfavourable to any literary or intellectual exertion; and it is scarcely less apparent that these vicissitudes of fortune, like so many successive gales, ventilated and kept alive the genius of the age and country.

It was Otho the Great, who, a little after the middle of the tenth century, revived in Italy the Imperial dominion, and, as a warrior and a legislator, equalled, and perhaps surpassed, the founder of the Western Empire. The government he established there, agreeably to the ideas and practice of Europe, was constructed on feudal principles, and when he or his successors visited Italy, they regularly convened at Roncaglia the ecclesiastical and temporal orders, to grant investitures, promulge laws, and determine appeals. The boundaries of this feudal sovereignty were somewhat advanced by Conrad, the founder of the Franconian family, and his son Henry the Black; but an effectual barrier was opposed to farther attempts by the skilful and successful politics of Hildebrand. On the whole, the Imperial dominion seems to have been of a nature that left sufficient room for the growth and display of the native qualities and energies of the soil. While distance of situation forbade, in the emperors, the vigilant exercise of a restless tyranny, it might still prevent in his vassals the accumulation

mulation of a too dangerous power ; and when justice called for the interference of the Imperial authority, there was nothing to dread from the influence of petty partialities and local prejudices. The course was fairly open, genius was unchecked ; at least the disposition of the age took its proper ply.

It was unfortunate for themselves, for letters and humanity, that the political advantages arising from the contrasted situation of the different pretenders to power in Italy should never have been *properly* applied by the Italians themselves. They weakly endeavoured to consolidate with their own interests the unmingling views of aliens and foreigners. They were accessaries, almost principals, to their own misfortunes. Ingenuity cannot furnish a single excuse for their entering, with such intemperance and perseverance of zeal, into the quarrels of the emperors and popes, and forging chains for themselves and posterity. A dreadful civil war of two hundred years, existing in the very heart of the country, may be charged to the memory of these rash partisans ; and modern history exhibits

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no names, which recur to the reader with so many circumstances of disgust and horror, as those of Guelph and Ghibelline. Is it carrying a supposition too far to suggest, that there might be something naturally ardent, vindictive, and sanguinary, in the Italian character of that day? It is at least certain, that in the fourteenth century, when the phantom of Imperial power no longer encouraged friends or excited enemies, faction still maintained her ascendancy; still equal numbers with equal depravity ranged themselves under her standard, and rallied at her voice, under the fresh names of Visconti and Torriani, Neri and Bianchi. Nay, even those cities which escaped the bitter fruits of disunion and discord, engaged themselves in unnecessary wars with their neighbours; each state seemed anxious to rise on the immediate ruins of its rival; and the impartial historian of the free states of Venice, Genoa, Lucca, and Pisa, would have to record and regret the unjust, violent, and sanguinary spirit of his fellow-citizens.

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Of these scenes many appear unfriendly to mental progress and intellectual exertion, and yet, without the affectation of philosophising on the subject, it is by no means difficult to deduce some consequences favourable to the same cause. In civil wars and tumultuous governments, in revolutions equally important and unexpected, in daily instances of the smiles and frowns of fortune, the best energies of the mind must be displayed, and might be created. Warriors, statesmen, orators, rose in these trying necessities of the times, children of the storm, and framed with qualities to subsist in it. And when a calm occurred, what more reasonable than to expect a succession of historians, poets, and even philosophers? Besides, in estimating the operations of political revolutions on literature, we must not forget to consider how far the persons and the property of the learned are affected by them. Scholars seem to have been as little hurt by these variations of Italian government as they have been since by the wars in Flanders, in which universities flourished and the presses were open, whether

ther Bruffels had a Spanish or an Austrian governor.

And, indeed, it must be confessed, whatever clouds from time to time hung over public affairs, a flattering tranquillity was visible in the scenes of retired life, and the gay sunshine of patronage, with little exception, cheered the scholar's toils. Frederic Barbarossa, though represented as the scourge of Italy, and really the destroyer of Milan, seems to have afforded the first example of that regard to the prosperity of letters, which does so much honour to sovereigns; and contributes so effectually to their own immortality. With a due respect to the sciences, poetry obtained his particular favour; as he was king of Arles, on which Provence depended, his court resounded with the songs of the Troubadours, and he was himself by no means an indifferent proficient in the gay art. In this career he was followed by neither of his sons, Henry and Philip; the life of the former was devoted to ambitious projects and stained by sanguinary actions; and Philip's long and unfortunate contest with
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Otho, left him no leisure for literature or patronage.

But Frederic the Second surpassed his grandfather in this the most meritorious and pleasing part of his character. He was not only a most generous patron, but, when the times are considered, an accomplished scholar. He was born and educated in Italy, never left it till he had attained the age of manhood, returned to it as soon as he could, and closed his life in it. His attachment to natural history was evinced by a treatise on the nature of birds, and he was one of the first and most successful cultivators of Italian poetry. As a linguist, if his panegyrics may be credited, he must have taken the lead of any scholar of those days, since they ascribe to him a perfect acquaintance with five languages, besides that in which he *certainly* excelled—German, French, Greek, Latin, and Arabic. His love of learning was amply shewn by his liberal foundation of the university of Naples and his generous encouragement of the school of Salernum, by his patronage of the civil law as an academical study, and

and the first diffusion of the works of Aristotle in a Latin dress. Nor must we forget that these exertions were made in periods of public distraction, when the persecutions of the popes, and continual revolts in Germany and Italy might well have occupied his undivided attention.

His minister and favourite, Petrus de Vineis, was as truly a Mæcenæ as his master was an Augustus. The fortunes of this extraordinary man would make an interesting volume, and almost a romance. His letters, in their present imperfect state, might form a striking outline of his own life, and illustrate the political and literary history of an obscure period. Even in this sketch he must not be passed over without a short notice. He was an Italian meanly born, and educated at Bologna by the charity of his opulent neighbours. Here he distinguished himself so effectually, that his fame reached the ears of the emperor; and his learning, eloquence, and address soon secured him a footing at court. In the course of his elevation he obtained the dignity of chancellor, and enjoyed the yet

higher honour of a bosom friend of his master. With his merits as a politician we have no concern. As a patron of letters it is incontestable, that he paid a particular attention to the progress of learning in Italy, and devoted to it his authority, riches, and power. As an author, besides the volume of letters yet extant, he appears to have employed his pen in a moral tract on consolation, in drawing up a code of laws for the government of Sicily, and in defending the Imperial power against the papal usurpations. As a civilian he was surpassed by none of his cotemporaries, as an orator he far excelled them, and as a poet he divides the laurel with his master. The book *de tribus impostoribus*, whose existence is reasonably questioned, has been ascribed by some to the emperor, and by others to the minister. But there is little appearance, if either had been concerned, that it would have escaped the notice and reprobation of such vigilant enemies as Gregory the Ninth, and Innocent the Fourth; and that every writer of the period should have been totally silent on the subject.

Petrus

Petrus de Vineis finished his splendid career by a reverse of fortune equally terrible and unexpected. Despised, disgraced, deprived of his eyes, and thrown into a dungeon, in the phrenzy of despair he destroyed himself. The cause of this criminal rashness it is impossible to assign, but not difficult to guess. The accounts of his contemporaries vary; but one of the latest of the Italian historians*, after an accurate estimate of probabilities, determines that he had been tampered with by Innocent the Fourth, and had deserted the interests of his master. It is certain, that in the council of Lyons holden for the purpose of excommunicating the emperor, and to which Thaddeus de Sessa and himself had been deputed to support his interests, while the former spoke with a boldness and eloquence which echoed through Europe, Petrus maintained a resolute silence. This will justify an unfavourable construction. It is not probable he should have proceeded to the dangerous lengths supposed by Matthew Paris, of poisoning his benefactor; nor is it likely, if he had been totally guiltless, his enemies would have

* Giannoné.

been

been able not only to displace him from the post of power and confidence, but to crush him with such an ignominious fall.

Conrad and Mainfroy, the sons of Frederic, inherited their father's love for learning. The former reformed and augmented the school at Salernum, the latter distinguished the university of Naples with his particular attention. Besides Mainfroy was a tolerable philosopher, a good Italian poet, and had pushed his inquiries into most subjects of literature and science. When the Neapolitan sceptre passed into the hands of France, patronage was transferred with it, and Charles of Anjou, and his son Charles the Second, ranked beneath none of their predecessors in their zeal to promote the interests of learning.

Perhaps, considering their number, and estimating their opportunities, no set of men have, on the whole, been worse patrons to letters than the popes. During the twelfth century, Alexander the Third seems alone distinguished by his exertions in the cause of learning. He procured a law in a general council for the restoration of the

old schools in monasteries and cathedrals, and the erection of new ones ; and though these institutions were superseded in the next century by universities, they bear an honourable testimony to his zeal for learning. His successors down to Innocent the Third were engrossed by the more busy or splendid scenes of temporal grandeur, and were neither scholars themselves, nor encouraged scholars. Innocent, so famed for his ambitious and daring politics, had found time to cultivate his talents, and aspired to the scholar's praise. He was the oracle of the civil and canon law, and distinguished himself as a learned and equitable judge. Thrice in the week he opened a court for the decision of processes, secular as well as ecclesiastical, weighed the opposing reasons of the parties with candour and judgment, and exhibited in his decisions such exactitude and justice, that the most celebrated cases throughout Europe were referred to his tribunal. His desire of extending the benefits of science are obvious from the regulations he recommended to the Council of Lateran, and by which an
indolent

indolent or a dissipated clergy might be roused to their professional studies or even to scientific pursuits. He was prodigal of his favours to the university of Bologna, and Paris boasts no older statutes than those he furnished. These are amiable traits in the pontiff's character; and the justice, which he loved, demands, that, while his failings are remembered, his merits should be recorded.

Honorius the Third very ably seconded these useful designs, not only with respect to the university of Paris, but with a view to the general melioration of the studies of the age, and by enforcing the attendance of the younger canons of each cathedral at their nearest universities, laid the foundation of that union which yet subsists between the clerical and academical character. Their successors were instructed and animated by such examples. Gregory the Ninth paid a particular attention to the Canon Law, and addressed his labours to the university of Bologna. Paris shared his kindness too at a period when it was particularly wanted, when domestic troubles

and disputes had dispersed its members and endangered its existence. Innocent the Fourth was a still more zealous patron of this celebrated university; and it is pleasing to observe, that if France was thus indebted to Italian munificence, Italy experienced a reciprocation of the kind office of patronage in Urban the Third, by birth a Frenchman. The discovery of a manuscript in the Ambrosian library has set his character in an interesting point of view. Campanus de Novara, in his dedication of a book on the sphere to this pontiff, informs us, that he drew philosophy from the most humble condition, and distinguished it by his favours and liberalities; that his table was crowded by philosophers, whose disputes he reconciled or decided; and that this work was a tribute of gratitude for the favours he had received. Another well-authenticated instance of his attention to the advancement of philosophy occurs in his singling out Thomas Aquinas, the most celebrated genius of his age, for the task of commenting Aristotle. This was an Herculean task; but no one was so able to elucidate

elucidate the peripatetic philosophy, and with the advantage of an uncorrupted text; the commentator, even in this enlightened period, might have found a place in a modern library. His labours now quietly repose amid the dust of the conventual shelves.

Patronage was little known or practised on this side of the Alps, and its praise will reach only a few sovereigns. The Barons had other means of disposing of their revenues, in the support of an armed retinue, the indulgence of riotous conviviality, and the mimicry of royal splendour. Spain, during the whole of the twelfth and great part of the thirteenth century, was divided into a variety of principalities, which, when they did not oppose the common enemy the Moor, were engaged with each other in minuter, but more desolating wars. Ferdinand the Third, who has found a place amongst the saints of the Romish Calendar, was the first of their kings who may be considered as having gained a complete ascendancy, by conquest or expulsion, over the Moorish arms; and he testified his at-

tion to learning by the foundation of the celebrated university of Salamanca, which was still more liberally patronised by his son and successor Alphonso. The additional title of astronomer designates his particular merits, and the tables which were drawn up under his direction still bear his name and do honour to his memory. He might produce a further claim to distinguished notice, for having endeavoured to clear the difficulties of jurisprudence, and digest a code of his country's laws for the public use.

Of the sovereigns of France, several as warriors and politicians are entitled to distinguished attention; but none stand forward as scholars and patrons. Paris, originally as a school, and under Philip Augustus as a university, had acquired great celebrity; but its obligations to royal munificence are extremely slender; nor were the wild notes of the Troubadours heard at court with pleasure, or repaid with encouragement. St. Louis seems not to have been without some sensibility to the cause of letters. He founded the Sorbonne,

bonne, and left behind him, if it may be so called, a library; but it admitted only, as might be expected from his turn of mind, a few volumes on theological subjects.

These were feeble essays in patronage, and considerably surpassed by their contemporaries in England. William the Conqueror and his successors were unquestionably men of considerable abilities; his son, Henry the First, was distinguished for his learning; and the second Henry seems to have had equal pretensions. Richard the First mingled poetry with arms; Henry the Third gave the poetical art an establishment in his court; and our laureate looks to this era for his salary and his sack. Master Henry, the versifier, was the humble precursor of the Chaucers and Drydens, the Rowes and Wartons. Learning and science seem not to have experienced, nor could they in the nature of things expect much *public* patronage; but the minstrels were more fortunate, had become a necessary appendage in the castles of the great, and found ample encouragement and employ-

ment in the monasteries. Perhaps a more extended patronage, however useful in other respects, might, just at that period, have been attended with no essential service to the English language. French was spoken at court, was familiar to the scholars of the age, and used by them in composition : encouragement might have given rise to more frequent productions in that tongue ; but a translation of these fashionable performances into our vernacular idiom, a second-hand and circuitous benefit, would have been the only probable advantage.

Establishment of Universities.

The establishment of Universities, so general in the thirteenth century, tended very essentially to the diffusion of learning. Some were founded very early, and Paris carries its pretensions as high as Charlemagne. Its real claims are dated from the reign of Philip Augustus, when it first embraced the circle of sciences, as its name imports, established its classes or faculties, created a chancellor, professors, and graduates ; and afforded the first sketch of a municipal system, disgraced by the fooleries of the mechanical mysteries. However, not-

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withstanding the zeal and labour of the Parisian antiquaries, to Bologna seems due the honoured title of Mother of the European Universities. It was within her walls, during the tumult and desolation of the eleventh century, that Learning first attempted to raise her head; and scholars and soldiers were often mingled in the same street, which resounded alternately with the shouts of warriors and the vociferation of disputants. In the twelfth century, the almost incredible number of ten thousand students was assembled there, and each country of Europe had its regents and professors to prevent a second confusion of tongues in this modern Babel. The Civil and Canon Laws were the favourite, almost the exclusive studies. Paris addressed herself more particularly, and almost with equal success to theology. Salernum was equally unrivalled in medical pursuits, and as early back as the first year of the twelfth century dedicated to Robert the son of William the Conqueror a sample in Leonine verses, yet extant, of its skill in the healing art. But it flourished only under
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the humble name of school; and the diploma, which, in process of time, constituted it a university, seems to have been the signal for the expiration of its learning and the extinction of its authority. Oxford began now to acquire celebrity, and in the hosts of its students, if in no other respect, far outstripped its younger rival. Many universities were founded in this century both in Italy and France, but need not be particularized, since they appear to have been all servilely cast in the same mould with Bologna and Paris, in their form, discipline, and studies. But it was thus on every side the student received solicitation and encouragement to become wise and learned.

Not but these institutions were in many respects extremely defective. It would be absurd to blame them for not teaching more than they did, since universities at best can only be the repositories of the learning of an age; but they deserve reprehension for defective modes of instruction, for a gross neglect of discipline, and a culpable indifference to the moral character.

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A foolish competition for pupils amongst the professors necessarily ended in a loss of the reverence they might have claimed, and destroyed the benefits of subordination. The most scandalous scenes occurred; and a connivance at their expences, and an indulgence of their follies, encouraged the youth of the thirteenth century to the grossest and most frequent excesses. The disease at last brought a remedy with it; and it was found that a certain salary from the public, or an endowed revenue, could alone secure the independence of the tutor and the advantage of the pupil. Another striking defect might be traced in the association and confederacy of the natives of the respective countries; as it fortified their national pride, fermented their national antipathies, encouraged a loose spirit of turbulence and riot, and proved a great and increasing impediment to all intellectual progress and literary improvement. I should find it an easy matter to enlarge the catalogue of academical defects then subsisting, and which the good sense of the present age has not entirely reformed; but they by no means counter-

counterbalance the avowed benefits of these institutions. Theology, law, and medicine were, upon the whole, ably professed and diligently taught; and the public, in the result, were put in possession of an useful, and, from its nature, an increasing stock of learning and science.

Travels of
Scholars.

To this era we may refer another most useful auxiliary to learning, in the travels of scholars, and their consequent publication and promulgation. The Crusades had opened a connexion with the East, which lasted after their discontinuance; and the votaries of learning and commerce supplied the place of those martial bigots who had carried terror and devastation with them. But it was Marco Polo, the Venetian, who first set the enterprising scholar a truly attractive example, by the extent and variety of his journeys, by the surprising spectacles he saw, the important transactions he recorded, and, more than all, by the riches and fame he acquired. In point of time he has predecessors, and he appears to have been formed under the eye of his father and uncle, themselves distinguished travellers; but

but the merit of communication is original and his own, and the circumstance of his writing his narrative in the Venetian dialect places him amongst the earliest cultivators of his native language. His travels have produced criticism and contestation. Whoever now takes up his book will meet with many geographical mistakes, which skill cannot rectify nor conjecture adjust; he will find absurdities to smile at, and ignorance to pity; to many passages he will suspend his assent, to some he will deny all credit. But the general veracity of his narration stands upon solid grounds; and as the age of criticism had not yet arrived, the specious wonders of his travels were eagerly heard and rapidly diffused; his fame soon extended beyond Italy, a Latin translation, about the close of the century, spread the work over Europe, and he may be considered as having kindled in the breasts of scholars the zeal of imitation and the spirit of rivalry. Our Mandeville, who followed about half a century after, was formed in this school; and he and his predecessor demand

demand the praises of posterity for having shewn Europe the practicability of travels in countries distant and known only by name; for having opened, to the agents of commerce and the missionaries of religion, the hitherto inaccessible regions of the East, and strewn the traveller's path over with flowers.

CHAP. II.

*A View of the State of the Sciences, Arts, and
polite Literature of the Twelfth and Thirteenth
Centuries.*

SUCH were the advantages which smiled on the cause of learning ; it remains to see how they were improved, and to exhibit, as succinctly and accurately as we can, an idea of its real state during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

The great and leading study of the age was theology, and in the spirit of that division, which the theologians affected, it offers itself to our notice under a few distinct heads.—1. First in the list we may place the professors of scholastic divinity, whose merits and labours will presently demand a more particular notice.—2. The bishops and superior clergy, who most resembled, to a hasty view, the primitive fathers and teachers, in such essential points

as the superintendence of the church, the refutation of heresies, and the duties of occasional instruction, whether by pastoral charges or by pulpit eloquence. That this important office was discharged either with the zeal of the apostles or the learning of the fathers no one will assert, and it would be easier to exhibit proofs of zeal than of abilities and erudition.—3. The parochial clergy, on whom more particularly devolved the explication of scripture or positive theology, the instruction of the ignorant, the reformation of sinners, and the confirmation of penitents. Of these objects, it must be admitted, they fell very short. In matters of faith and doctrine they seemed more tenacious of a uniform than a rational belief; a devoted attachment to ceremonial and ritual observances they implicitly received as a legacy of the tenth century; and in their reception of the false decretals, and their acquiescence in the papal usurpations, surpassed their credulous or superstitious predecessors. Still, to the honour of this period and this very body of men, we may observe that the clear and unequivocal

equivocal symptoms of a religious reformation might now be traced. They discover themselves in a variety of circumstances too minute for detail, but they force themselves on the most sluggish apprehension in that unexampled display of spirit, sense, and truth, in France and in England, which were dreaded and persecuted under the name of heresy, against which inquisitions were instituted, anathemas levelled, and crusades preached and fought in vain.—

4. The casuists now began to occupy, as their own distinct territory, the moral portion of scripture, and may be considered as half brothers, at least, of the scholastic theologians, fighting too, like them, under the banner of Aristotle. Their hands presumed to unroll the inexhaustible volume of cases of conscience, and they soon gained a considerable ascendancy over the weakness, the remorse, or the superstition of their hearers. They were no contributors to the stock of learning, and but penurious ones, I fear, to the morality of their times. The completion of these casuistical studies, which

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here it is sufficient to glance at, was reserved for a later age and jesuitical sagacity.

The Arabians introduced Aristotle to the notice of Europe, and Lanfranc, Abelard, and Petrus Lombardus, founded the scholastic theology on the study of the philosopher. After its introduction it was probably at first gratuitously pursued, not only from the recommendation of novelty, but as it furnished inexhaustible food for the rude cravings of the intellectual appetite. Besides, it carried with it this peculiar advantage, that it was an independent and exclusive study, wanted little previous information, and might be pursued without the use of books, which could be procured only at an extraordinary expence. This latter circumstance will serve, in a great measure, to account for its general adoption in contradiction to the experience of other nations, and almost in defiance, as it should seem, of reason itself. The progress of Greek and Roman learning exhibits the mind amused at first with poetical exertions, pleased in succession with history and eloquence,

eloquence, and subsiding, at last, in the graver labours of philosophy. Here the order was completely inverted, and the student, who could hardly read; and had not presumed to think, was introduced at the first step into the Lyceum itself. Even the Arabians, who are supposed to have led the way, did not, in this respect, lend the sanction of their example, since they had incontestably cultivated poetry and history, before they commented Aristotle and studied philosophy.

The proficient in this new study became, in due time, willing to repay themselves for their trouble. Sensible that something more was necessary to stimulate the mass of students than the prospect of amusement or information, they proclaimed their chief the prop and support of the Christian cause; and the gradual adoption of this idea finally interwove the peripatetic philosophy with the religious system of Europe. Henceforward subsisted for every mind a permanent incentive; and piety, ambition, interest, alike found in it occupation and reward. Nor was Aristotle a parsimonious

benefactor to his friends ; and a long train of abbots, bishops, and perhaps of saints, might be cited to thank him for the enjoyment of wealth and honour. With such attractions who can wonder at the spread and success of the Aristotelian philosophy ?

It soon boasted some eminent names. In its first stage, which lasted about two hundred years, which begins with Anselm and closes with Albert the Great, might be mentioned many men of first-rate abilities, and destined to take the lead in any department of intellectual exertion. The thirteenth century was, however, the æra of its most splendid success ; and Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus, the angelical and the subtle doctors, are the brightest stars in the scholastic constellation. Incredible numbers engaged in this fashionable study, and the school derived an inexhaustible supply from the minor orders, the preaching friars, who now began to swarm over Europe. Created expressly to stand in the gap against the rising sects which attacked the doctrines of the church, and the pretensions of its guide, they were obliged to

to come armed into the field, and no better weapons could be found than those fabricated in the Aristotelian arsenal. But had they been disposed to indolence, where was their resource? Their express formation, in a particular manner, summoned them to their studies; their seclusion debarred them from commerce and connexion with the active world; their poverty foreclosed their views of opulent endowments, and even withheld the acquisition of books for the pursuit of other studies. In the profound meditation of scholastic subtleties they flattered themselves at least with hope of answering the end of their foundation, and they found in it at once occupation and applause. The schools soon refounded with their disputes, and their ponderous labours loaded the shelves of the monastic libraries.

But whatever the encouragement, one cannot, at a distant period, avoid expressing surprise that this useless study should have attracted such powerful minds, have divided universities, interested courts, and been celebrated in every corner of Europe. Whether we consider the *style* or the

matter, there seems every thing offensive and repulsive. The ancient philosophers, it is well known, without aspiring to eloquence, aimed at a natural and unaffected style, as best calculated for argument and conviction; and Aristotle himself, however disfigured by commentators and translators, was esteemed one of the purest and politest writers of his time. In the language of the schoolmen, this merit is entirely lost; and the dreary and never-ending wildness of an Arabian desert without a stream, a tree, or a flower, to cheer the traveller, is a faint and inadequate representation of its desolate barrenness.

Their matter is as little attractive. The subjects they chose being generally the speculative parts of divinity, were least capable of being elucidated; and their definitions, divisions, statements, proofs, and inductions, having no foundation in nature or reason, had no tendency to enlarge the boundaries of human knowledge. The arts of disputation are to the mind what exercise is to the body; they may confirm vigour and increase activity; but it is by study,

study, meditation, and experience alone that the fund of learning can be refreshed and enlarged. Those who have taken the pains to turn over their ponderous volumes have been amazed at their paucity of ideas, at the formation of such immense bodies, without soul or animation. The skill, the labour, and the productions of the spider, have been brought forward to explain and illustrate the texture and inanity of their literary labours. A more ingenious comparison has assimilated them to those Indians who, by the skilful disposition of a few feathers, their only stock, form a thousand varieties of figure and a perpetual change of picture. Not but their merits, even in this respect, have been praised far beyond any reasonable claim. Facility and dispatch are the common reward of persevering scholars; and a mechanical ringing of changes on one idea, the trite and endless repetitions of their modes of disputation, were little tricks of their trade within the grasp of the most ordinary student. If we suppose a man setting down at a time when books were scarce, feigning what an ad-

versary might possibly object to any particular passage or doctrine, and then answering those objections, we find him in possession of an infallible method to fill folios, and engross the whole of a patriarchal life. The forcible statement of a possible objection, and a satisfactory answer to it, might display an acute and vigorous understanding. In this intellectual fencing school, skill and strength would be discovered and applauded; from fighting with shadows the combatant might rise to contend with substances, and distinguish himself in the campaigns of a polemic war.

As after the institution of universities, theological degrees were conferred independently of the pastoral charge, and the masters and doctors were lavishly paid for excellence in this favourite pursuit, they soon devoted their whole time, as their particular qualifications led them to the schools, where they might dispute, or to retirement, where they might uninterruptedly compose. In the former were produced those noisy disputes, which died with the occasion, and in the latter those

those immense compilations, of which the name only is remembered. Hence the ponderous labours of Albertus Magnus, and the sum of Thomas Aquinas. A flock of commentators followed; no less than two hundred and fifty expositions were written on the sentences of Petrus Lombardus, and nothing met the student's eye but a dreary waste of metaphysical and scholastic difficulties. Of the other classes of theologians, whom we slightly reviewed, none attained to equal eminence with the schoolmen, nor come down to posterity distinguished by acuteness of parts, extent of learning, or pertinacity of labour.

Next to the theologians, the civilians Civilians. formed the most numerous body, and theirs was undoubtedly the most profitable and lucrative study. Its knowledge secured to men of retired habits the comforts of a professorial chair; to ambitious minds it opened the courts and cabinets of princes; and where money formed the predominant object, dropped down in golden showers before the masters of forensic eloquence.

quence. Soon after Irnerius and his successors had set the example, it was taught in all the universities of Europe; but with most distinguished success at Bologna, where a series of learned professors maintained the post of honour with increasing reputation. Their names, if we except Accursius the Great, and his son Francis, are now little remembered. The latter having resided eight years in the court of our Edward the First, and having probably seasoned his mind with those true principles of equity which distinguished his laws, may yet excite a momentary attention in an English reader. Within the thirteenth century no less than a hundred professors read lectures at Bologna; which, allowing to each of these literary monarchs a reign of eight years, will exhibit the cotemporary labours and rivalry of twelve.—Some services they still continued to render to the general cause of learning; but their advancement in perspicuity of method and propriety of style kept no pace with their increasing numbers and encouragement. When we look at the

samples of wit and humour, yet preserved, of Odofred, in which he was admitted to excel his cotemporaries, we must smile at his rusticity, and almost pity his barbarity. In teaching, it was still the mode to explain one decree by another, and the glosses were supplied principally from the text. The civilians were little acquainted with history, careless of the other branches of knowledge, and their Latin was not yet such as ought to have flowed from the pens of men, who were familiar with the language of the digest.

What has been said of the style and Canonists method of the civilians will apply generally to the canonists; though the popes, during the two centuries under consideration, spared no pains or expence to complete the science and promote its diffusion. Several were eminent for its knowledge, and Innocent the Fourth had himself been a professor at Bologna, commented the decretals of Gregory the Ninth, and entered the lists of controversy with Petrus de Vineis.—Here, were patronage, skill, and assiduity united, but the diligence and progress of the

the student were not proportionably conspicuous.

Mathema-
tics.

It cannot be said that mathematical studies were prosecuted with vigour or success, though warmly patronised by Urban the Fourth, The sluggish pupils of the Arabian schools walked contentedly within the circle of their masters discoveries. Geometry, however, was not unknown or uncultivated, nor can Italy be charged with a total ignorance or neglect of algebra. Campanus de Novara is said to have been a translator of Euclid from an Arabic copy ; but was probably a commentator or expofitor ; and he had already written on the sphere. With these aids astronomy might have been advanced ; but judicial astrology opposed an effectual impediment. With all his claims to the scholar's notice, Frederic the Second must be considered as having given fashion and importance to this fascinating study. It was derived from the same source, the Arabian, as the sciences in general, but the Italians added some high-seasoned improvements ; and if the kindred follies of transmuting metals, and immortalising

talising life, proved less attractive, we must ascribe it to a deficiency in chymistry, their basis, and not to any want of eager and persevering credulity. The number of astrologers who were admitted to the councils of the stars, and opened the book of destiny to their employers, was certainly considerable ; but greater swarms might have been expected, at a period when they were protected by magistrates, entertained by princes, and caressed by beauties, when universities relaxed in their favour, and if they withheld a professor's chair, granted them pensions, and, exempting them from the toil of teaching, conferred its rewards.

It might be proved that the mechanical arts had received a considerable degree of improvement, which will prove a correspondent progress in the theory of science, since no edifice can be raised without a suitable groundwork. The age was honoured by two most useful and important inventions, that of spectacles, and the mariner's compass. The former has been ascribed to our countryman Roger Bacon, but it seems probable, that he did not advance far

Mechanics.

far beyond the antients, who had an idea of magnifying writing by the means of crystal globes filled with water. The æra of the discovery is generally fixed at the close of the thirteenth century, and the monumental inscription of Salvino d'Armato, discovered at Florence, and probably authentic, ascertains himself as the inventor,

The same period boasts the discovery of the mariner's compass; the honour is given to Flavio Gilia, or Gioja, a pilot at Amalphi, a place already famous for the disclosure of the pandects. The antients appear to have known nothing of the properties of the loadstone, nor consequently of its use in navigation. Among the moderns, Marco Polo is supposed, without foundation, to have brought the compass from China, and the French have contested, with more spirit than accuracy, the merit of this invention. Their claim rests on the circumstance of the fleur-de-lys, their arms, having been from the earliest time used as its ornamental appendage; but they are well-known to have been common at Amalphi

as armorial ensigns, and were probably introduced by the Angevin family on their establishment at Naples. The pretensions of England and Holland to the same honour seem grounded merely on the probability that so material a discovery would be made by nations most skilled in the arts of navigation and commerce. The learned historian of Italian literature, after balancing all that has been asserted or surmised on the subject, determines that the discovery was first notified to Europe in the thirteenth century, most probably by the Amalphitans, but that it was really derived from the Arabians ; and thus adds another wreath to the established honours of that ingenious people.

Medicine during this period received Medicine. some considerable improvements, and the studies of anatomy, chymistry, and botany were at last deemed necessary to the medical proficient. But an unfortunate idea, that the stars influenced not only the destiny of the sick, but the efficacy of prescription, and the consequences of operation, made it necessary to add astrology to their other studies.

studies. A wise regulation of Frederic the Second, which enforced the necessity of an examination, and the possession of a privilege encouraged the pursuit of a systematic study, and extended the fame of the school of Salernum. It was about this time that physicians were regularly employed by universities and the religious communities, and their number could have been by no means inconsiderable, when two hundred are recorded to have practised in Milan alone. It was about the middle of the thirteenth century that Bologna appears to have conferred the degrees of doctor and master in medicine; honours hitherto confined to civilians and canonists, and this useful regulation was readily adopted by the other universities of Europe.

The profession was in clerical hands, and the credit of Salernum itself was sustained principally by the neighbouring monks of Monte Cassino. Bishops, and even Archbishops, did not disdain its practice; and whatever may be thought of the pride of the Italian nobles, proofs are not wanting to shew, that they did not despise

despise the art, nor refuse its rewards. The names of the noblest families in Florence, the Medici, Pazzi, Salviati, are derived from the mechanical fraternities in which their ancestors were inscribed. The clergy long continued the principal physicians of Europe. Those canons, afterwards framed to prevent the union of the clerical with either the medical or legal profession, applied only to the monastic orders, and this science continued in the possession of the secular clergy above three hundred years after the date of its first prohibition. The want of a permission to keep a shop for vending drugs, and the interdiction from shedding blood, seem to have given rise to the distinction of the physician who prescribes, the apothecary who prepares, and the surgeon who executes.—One only could be exercised by the priest, and it were easy to state the reason why this hold was surrendered or deserted.

If we turn our attention to Polite Literature, we shall find less equivocal proofs of the intellectual advancement of the age. Its poetical efforts are not, however, entitled to

View of
Polite Literature.

any marked distinction. If those strains of piety are excepted, which the church adopted amongst its offices, very few specimens will be found of the Latin labours of the muse; and the Leonine verses, then in such high repute, had the disadvantage of fettering the poet with a double chain, by superadding the necessity of a rhyme to the Latin hexameter. The Troubadours without contest carried off the prize of poetry, and found admirers and imitators in every country; and almost might they have flattered themselves with having introduced a universal poetical language. But their empire was short; and in the thirteenth century the Italians, who had upholden the credit of the Provençal school, turned themselves to the cultivation of their own tongue. The original Latin, changed and debased by barbarous infusions, was gradually formed and moulded into a new language. Some early exertions were made in prose, but the Sicilians are generally supposed to be the first who cultivated it for the purposes of poetry, or who at least communicated that vowelly termination by which

which it is distinguished from its original. But these accounts are obscure; and the honour of first appropriating the Italian to the purposes of poetry seems to rest with Frederic the Second, his two natural sons Enzo, or Entius, and Mainfroy, and his minister Petrus de Vineis. His successors in this undertaking have been celebrated by Dante; but with the exception of Guy Cavalcante, his poetical master, though he himself honours Guinicelli with the title of Father, a deserved forgetfulness has invaded their works and almost their names.

Though under their hands the cultivation of the language was sensibly advanced, they seem not to have tried their powers in any long and serious compositions. The epic was untrodden ground, and the theatre, if we except some mean representations of the Christian mysteries, in a great measure unknown. When churchmen were the only poets, it is barely possible that any thing but a dramatic theology should find its way to the stage, and the first essays in every country were necessarily of this description. The thirteenth century may, however, claim

the honour of representing the undoubted outlines of a real dramatic performance, in which a dialogue and a plot distinguish it from such pantomimes and shews as are mentioned in the old chronicle of Milan, where, when the song of Roland and Oliver was over, "mimics and buffoons played on instruments and danced with decency." But these commencements were rude; and while in Greece the dramatic art attained in half a century inimitable perfection, in modern Europe four hundred years elapsed before England or France produced those classical performances, which need not shrink from a comparison with the antient school.

Eloquence.

Oratory appears not to have been cultivated with success. The times might in some respects be favourable to its exertions, the genius of government not repugnant, but the state of the language was unfriendly in the extreme. *That* must attain a considerable degree of perfection, before the orator can appear to advantage. This was the case both in Greece and Italy, when Demosthenes and Cicero flourished, and
equally

equally so in France and England, when Boffuet, Flechier, and D'Aguesseau, and our parliamentary speakers of the two last reigns, contested the prize with the masters of antient eloquence. The rude Italian of this period must have discouraged or suppressed the powers and the ambition of Demosthenes himself.

On the decline of the Roman empire and learning, the name of grammarian was generally applied to scholars. The custom continued to the present age. Grammarians in the universities professed every part of polite literature were decorated with degrees, and rewarded with pensions; but it does not appear that any professor of that description occupied a regular chair at Bologna much before the middle of the thirteenth century. The dawn of grammatical knowledge, strictly speaking, may be referred to this period, since a taste for other languages, dead or living, was already conspicuous in Italy. The lexicon of Balbi was held in high estimation, and one of the first books circulated after the discovery of printing. Nor is it,

as its name imports, a mere vocabulary or dictionary; but it contains grammatical rules, rhetorical instructions, and may be considered as an infant classical Cyclopaedia. The greatest grammarian as he was then termed, in other words the most general scholar of the age, was Brunetto Latini, the master of Dante. The praises of I. Villani the historian, who was almost his cotemporary, will shew the extent and variety of his merits. "He was secretary," says Villani, "to our city (Florence). He was "a great philosopher, and an admirable "rhetorician, as well in the art of speaking "as in that of composition. It was he "who first polished our citizens, and taught "them to judge with correctness, and to "speak with elegance. He explained the "rhetoric of Cicero, and published his "treasure, besides several books on philosophical subjects, and one upon the virtues and vices." This treasure, which acquired the author a splendid reputation, is a collection, which is sufficiently multifarious and extensive; since it comprises sacred, political, and natural history, geography

graphy and astronomy, an abridgment of Aristotle's Ethics; a treatise on moral action, rules of speech, and a scheme of republican government. Such a miscellaneous production implies extent of comprehension in its author, and must have demanded activity of research, or diligence of collection; and its favourable reception is an honourable attestation to the awakening curiosity of the age. This work was written in French, which Brunetto even then preferred as the more agreeable and more general language; but at the same time he was an assiduous and successful cultivator of his vernacular idiom.

History does not appear to advantage during the period under consideration, either with regard to the subject, the method, or the execution. There began about this time, and it lasted long, an absurd affectation, borrowed probably from the Arabians, of attempting universal history. Beginning from the creation of the world, they deduced the thread of their narration to the happy era which witnessed their labours. The first part of their subject

History.

was barren, and must be uniform, since they could borrow their account of the cosmogony, the patriarchal age, the deluge, and the monarchical settlements of Asia, from Moses alone. Of the long intervening period, as they had but indifferent opportunities of consulting the proper historians, they could exhibit little better than a meagre and unimproved transcript, without they wandered into the regions of fiction. And even with respect to their own times, as Italy was torn and divided by the Guelphs and Ghibellines, faction of course would blind their sagacity, and exaggeration swell their pages. But as they were simple and ingenuous in their narrative of domestic events, truth might with certain allowances be discovered and ascertained. This plain but luminous criticism has led Muratori and Denina through the gloom of the middle ages.

The first and most natural way of writing history seems to be by way of chronicle or annals, the plain and unadorned record of events, exactly as they happened; the last in progression, and most pleasing, is a full
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and expanded narration animated by learning, philosophy, and eloquence. Above the former, but totally unable to grasp the latter, the historians of this age possess but few attractions. Besides, as they began to adopt the language of their respective countries, which were rude and unformed, their style is necessarily gross. An inoffensive simplicity must constitute, with a modern reader, their leading merit. To run over their names, and endeavour to appreciate their merits, would be neither instructive nor entertaining. They were, generally speaking, without any tincture of criticism, little acquainted with chronology or geography, and grossly credulous. Spinello, a Sicilian, has the merit of having composed his history in the vulgar tongue, at least in the Neapolitan dialect, little resembling the modern Italian; but sufficient to open the eyes of his contemporaries to that important fact, that it was possible to write history without the use of Latin. If we compare the Italian with the historians of other countries, we shall not find much additional cause for praise; our Matthew Paris stands at least upon a par with those
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who like himself wrote Latin, and Villehardouin, the French historian of the Crusades, need hardly shrink from a comparison with the early cultivators of the Italian. In fact it is but at a late period that Italy can pride herself in her historians; Machiavel and Guiccardin did not flourish till the sixteenth century, and Davila and Sarpi, or Fra Paolo, may be almost considered of the modern school.

It may be mentioned as an extraordinary circumstance in this imperfect state of historical exertion, that we find no inconsiderable number of authors who confined their views to the historical and local illustration of their respective provinces, countries, and cities, and some hardly aspired beyond the praise of their brother burghesses. The fondness, therefore, for petty history so remarkable at present, and so liberally rewarded, must not be produced as a proof of extraordinary knowledge and refined taste: it is only self-interest, or a minor spirit of patriotism, bursting out into ideal importance.

State of the
arts.

Such is the close connexion between literature and the arts, that we may expect
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with a sympathy of feeling a concurrence of success: and indeed we may now mark the dawn of the fine arts in Italy, spreading a gay lustre over the thirteenth century, and opening a promise of better days. Architecture is the first which was practised with success, and the advantages, which its students might have derived from the specimens of antient skill scattered over their country, were employed with no contemptible address. The public buildings exhibited an improved but solid taste. The palaces, and seats of justice, which were erected in almost every city, rose in rival splendour, and afforded incitement and encouragement to contending artists. Piety and munificence opened a source of equal emulation in the construction of churches and convents. Bridges, gates, fountains, and statues ornamented the interior of cities, whilst in their fortification and exterior defence they endeavoured to unite elegance and even beauty with security. Sculpture went hand in hand with architecture, patrons were generous, artists were diligent, and Lombardy, Tuscany, and even Rome, yet abound with works executed in this age,

age, which convey, amid the master-pieces with which they are surrounded, no unfavourable opinion of their skill. Florence, pre-eminent in her architects and sculptors, and exhibiting on all sides the proofs of their merit, had the glory of producing Cimabue, and Giotto, who revived the extinguished art of painting. Before their time it was either in the hands of the Greeks, or of Italians implicitly following their barbarous manner. Cimabue first presented the public with figures instead of monsters, dared to design, studied proportion, followed nature, and aspired after the ideal excellence which filled his mind. Giotto pursued the route of his predecessor, and perhaps, as the public grew enlightened, with increased success. Gaddi, the pupil of Cimabue, was not unworthy his master, and, in addition to painting, excelled in Mosaic, the only art which had not been destroyed by barbarism or time. The pleasure they had in contemplating the dawn of the art was increased by the imitation of existing life, and their vanity was agreeably flattered by portraits, which were now executed with success, and still more by
 minia-

miniatures, which might be made the companions of business, pleasure, or travel. It is a circumstance worthy of particular consideration, that the polite arts in their early state were often united in one person, and indeed seem not to have been separated, till the fastidiousness of increasing taste demanded in each a degree of perfection which could be obtained only by severe and undivided attention. This was the case with Margheritone d'Arezzo, and in a superior degree with Michael Angelo, whose gigantic abilities were commensurate with any design or any attainment.

But it is time to bring this long chapter to a close. The statement we have exhibited will shew, that the causes of the revival of learning had been operating with success, that some progress had been already made, and a still more considerable one might reasonably be expected. But the hopes of Europe, as we have seen, were principally confined to Italy; and her exertions, it must be confessed, were important, meritorious, and various. In common with France and the nations of the West, she cultivated the study of theology
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and the philosophy of Aristotle; in her historical and poetical essays she may fairly claim an equality of merit; and she may boast the communication of a taste for medical knowledge, and a relish for astronomical pursuits. In the civil and canon law she stood confessedly without a rival; she had studied with success many branches of the mathematics; and she animated and rewarded the discoveries of the mechanician, the ardour of the traveller, and the skill of the linguist. Such, I think, are the solid and unquestionable merits of Italy in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and such the noble foretaste she gave of excellence yet more splendid, and of services still more important.

But what was England doing in the thirteenth century, when in the seventeenth and eighteenth it has left Italy itself at so great a distance? Something has been already said of its patrons, and a few closing sentences may with propriety be devoted to its authors. It is of their merit rather than of their number that we may be proud. In the scholastic theology, which was so intensely studied, Grotius might be opposed
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to Bonaventure; and Duns Scotus to Thomas Aquinas. William of Malmesbury, as an historian, may, without presumption, take his seat with Godfrey of Viterbo; and in Latin poetry the Italians have no candidates for the laurel to be named with John Hunvill, Giraldus Cambrensis, Joseph of Exeter, or our honest Anacreon, Walter de Mapes.

Perhaps we must yield to them the merit of first cultivating their native tongue for poetical and historical composition; but we may found our apology in the comparatively degraded state of our language, and the successful introduction of French by our new masters. What could be done when the current of fashion set in strong against the Saxon or the English writers, when original compositions were alone made in French, and a hasty translation rendered them familiar to the mass of the nation?

As far as mathematical knowledge and mechanical skill extend, a profound theory, and the light of experimental philosophy, Roger Bacon stands upon higher ground than any man of his age. The most im-

portant inventions, those for instance of spectacles and gunpowder, have been attributed to him ; and even those who are disposed to deny these particular claims, acknowledge his powers, admit his capacity, and revere his genius.

In general learning and classical literature what name, Italian or French, can be opposed to that of Joannes Sarisburiensis? Brunetto Latini exhibits no specimens of equal merit ; and Italy has no scholar or composer before Petrarch, who had so accurately studied, or so successfully imitated, the great masters of the Latin school. Such was English excellence ; but it was too confined to have an effect on the spirit of the age or country, and must be deemed generally inferior to what was exhibited in Italy. England had greater men, but fewer who rose out of the ranks of mediocrity, who were celebrated in their own day, or are at all remembered by posterity.

THE END.



